AN

IRON CROWN

A TALE OF THE GREAT REPUBLIC.

"Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great?"

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INSCRIBED to the memory of the devoted men and women who in every age and in every land have lived and died for the cause of freedom and the equal rights of all men.

THE AUTHOR.

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AN IRON CROWN.

CHAPTER I.

THE STREET OF A THOUSAND PALACES.

Fifth Avenue, in the city of New York, though a street of world-wide celebrity, is not wholly pleasing to the eye of a visitor. One soon tires of the sameness exhibited in block after block of imposing brown stone edifices, many of which well deserve the name of palace in the splendor of their costly appointments. Most of the houses in the street are so much alike with their stately stone fronts three and four stories high, plate-glass windows, and massive stone steps leading from a stone sidewalk which ends a stone-like pavement, that the description of one would serve for two-thirds of the houses in the Avenue.

On a hot day in summer when this abode of magnificence is well-nigh deserted by its fashionable inhabitants, it is a dreary enough place. The country visitor who has come from far to view the wonders of the great metropolis concerning which he has read and marveled from his earliest recollection, is liable at such a time to think this a very stony sort of grandeur. The air is parched and oppressive. Above is a tropical sun, on either side inhospitable splendor. The closed doors and drawn blinds of these silent abodes of wealth have for the eye of the stranger no more welcome than is found at the door of a deserted cabin in the wilderness. He longs to escape from this sweltering, artificial Sahara. For him Fifth Avenue is a gross delusion and a cheat so far as concerns those pure delights which he imagined were everywhere apparent in that favored locality.

By contrast his thoughts seek a comfortable homestead in his own village, where the whitewash on the palings is renewed perennially and the vine clings luxuriant to the trellis, while roses burden the air with a perfume sweeter to his mind than any far-fetched perfumes of Araby. Or his

thoughts wander further to the long two-story farmhouse with an L and a wide porch running full length. On the porch are homely rocking chairs. In front stately oak, maple, elm or locust trees throw a dense, grateful shade as far as the porch. Beyond is the highway over which a farmer's wagon rattles; at the rear is the orchard where red-cheeked and golden apples shimmer in the hot sun of noonday and the predatory woodpecker feasts at will. Our visitor, if thoughtful, will realize that not in Fifth Avenue but in these distant places are the homes of the real American people. If he has just come from the Metropolitan Museum, he cannot but realize a striking similarity between the condition of the lifeless, stony figures in that repository of the relics of a past age and the petrified condition of the Avenue itself, with all its parched belongings. Whether of a philosophical turn of mind or not, he will scarcely remain long in this enormous oven, which needs only a lid to prepare it for baking, at such a season, on such a day.

But if the stranger leaves Fifth Avenue with the impression that its inhabitants have really fossilized to be more in keeping with the street, he will make a great mistake. The society butterflies, young and old, are at Saratoga, Newport, the Thousand Islands, the White Mountains, or some other of the many summer resorts which America can boast. These butterflies, of every size and color of wing, industriously flit on the mountain and by the sea. They dance, and bathe, and flirt, and eat, day after day, all summer long. Their painted wings glimmer in the sunbeams like the wings of their dumb namesakes, and apparently with as little purpose. The elderly male butterfly occasionally takes his dyspepsia, and his gold-rimmed spectacles to the city, to watch the gathering of golden nuggets, which must be converted into dust to gild the giddy wings of his progeny. The movements of this elderly male butterfly are a trifle heavy and at times somewhat anxious. In fact, he is not a real butterfly, for his development is usually arrested at the homely chrysalis condition, which renders the full-fledged, gorgeous-winged wonder a possibility. He is homely but necessary. While this dancing, eating, dallying and assiduous flirting goes on by the mountain and the sea, the American people, in shop, factory and store, on the farm, in the forest, in the mine, are daily, over millions of square miles, building the greatest and freest nation the world has ever seen.

But to return to Fifth Avenue. These miles of stately structures in brown stone, which have a deep interest to mankind, because of the fabulous sums necessary to build and maintain them, though much alike externally, differ in their interior appointments as much as their inmates differ in thought, feeling and action. This story has to do with only one of the grandest of them, the exact location of which for obvious reasons will not be made known. On that September day some years ago, this palatial residence might have been described as follows:

The striking and ornate exterior proclaimed that its owner possessed immense wealth. Nor did it indicate simply vulgar wealth. The chaste architecture of the beautiful front, plainly showed that the architect, at least, was a man of exquisite taste, whatever might be said of the owner. The massive carved front door opened into a large hall, which was in itself as capacious as the whole ground floor in many a house which shelters people of moderate means. This spacious entry was laid with small tiles in beautiful mosaic patterns. For some distance above the floor extended marble panels, in which were to be seen almost every known variety and color of that useful stone, all polished like a mirror. Even stones classed as precious, were here set into the walls in profusion, dazzling the eye with their brilliant reflections. Here lapis-lazuli blended its pleasing hues with malachite. On the walls were sculptured bas-reliefs, the works of master artists. Choice statuary reposed in niches, or was placed about the room. Costly bronzes, representing both ancient and modern art, were lodged on brackets, or otherwise placed with artistic effect. On the lofty ceilings in this hall and in the grand saloons, were beautiful frescoes. Richly ornamented gasaliers, whose chaste embellishments reflected the light in many hues, depended from the ceiling.

To the right of this grand hall were spacious parlors of unusual dimensions, to the left a library, a picture gallery, the owner's private office, and various smaller rooms. Further to the rear were the family dining-room, the public dining-room, and still beyond, the kitchens. The alcoves of books in fine bindings, the statuary which was in various places, the pictures in the gallery and in the parlors, the frescoes on the ceilings, all indicated refined and sumptuous tastes on the part of the owner. There was a conspicuous absence of those fantastic productions of household adornment whose only recom-

mendations are their deformity and uselessness. There were no fragile tables on unsteady legs or consumptive tripods supporting inadequate card baskets. The costly center-tables would have supported a roasted ox if necessary. The massive rosewood coat rack in the hall was built for service as well as show. It stood solidly on the marble floor instead of on four griffin's legs, as is sometimes the case, whose uncertain and erratic movements make the keeping closed of the front door a necessity, lest the whole machine should some fine day walk into the street and disappear around the corner. It made no difference to that coat rack whether you hung the coat there or the owner of the coat. This palatial abode was the residence of Henry Ingledee, the great railway king.

Mr. Ingledee was a man about fifty, and in spite of his long participation in the feverish excitements of Wall street, he showed few gray hairs and fewer lines in his face. This was wholly due to his iron constitution, for he never spared himself any labor, no matter how arduous, provided it brought or seemed likely to bring gold and extend his influence. He was above medium height, strongly built, with well-molded limbs, shapely, sinewy hands and small feet. His hair and complexion were dark, while his eyes were a puzzling contradiction between gray and a very dark blue. He had a rather square jaw, a firm mouth, broad high nose with wide nostrils, and heavy eyebrows. His full chest and short neck indicated great animal powers. A well-developed head gave assurance of mental as well as physical power. Mr. Ingledee was a man who would prove a formidable rival, indeed, a dangerous one, in any avocation he might adopt.

He was brought up a poor farmer's son, among the hills of Western Massachusetts. His humble origin, like that of so many men eminent in American history, had no effect in curtailing his visions of a different and vastly exalted sphere of action for the future. What that future might be, he knew not; and he was fully as ignorant of the path that might lead to it. While engaged in the daily labor of the farm he constantly dreamed of what he would do if he were rich and great. These dreams were so far beyond the petty details of his present life in their splendid proportions that he saved himself the humiliation of ridicule by wisely keeping them to himself. Only to his mother did he at times confide a vague purpose "to be something in the world," and she, poor woman, whose life was one continuous round of that tedious

drudgery ordinarily incident to the life of a farmer's wife, secretly abetted his ambition, though his father "kalkilated nothin' was so dead sartin' as farmin'?" Mrs. Ingledee thought her son might greatly improve his condition in life by teaching school, but he in his heart despised that unpretentious means of mounting the ladder of fame. He who would have made a splendid soldier, thought little of the hum-drum occupation of school teaching.

Yet, to please his mother, whose worth he understood, and whom he fully appreciated as his best friend on earth, he tried teaching school one term, at fifteen dollars per month and "board round;" that is, board free of charge by turns with every family in the district. But wealth accumulates slowly at fifteen dollars per month, though his balance sheet showed a gratifying exhibit at the end of the term. Out of the sixty dollars due for four months' salary, fifty-nine dollars and forty cents remained to his credit. The other sixty cents had been expended in paint to make a blackboard in the schoolhouse, the first ever heard of in that neighborhood. At the age of twenty-one, Henry Ingledee left home "to do for himself," as that rather arduous and sometimes very uncertain undertaking was then called. At the age of thirty he was a merchant in an obscure country town in the far West. At the age of fifty he was worth fifty millions, and a railway king of world-wide celebrity. It might have been better for him had he still been a country school teacher; it certainly would have been much better for the country.

Besides the father, the Ingledee family consisted of a son and a daughter, the mother having been dead many years. Silas Ingledee, the son, may be described in brief. He inherited many of his father's strong traits of character. These, however, were perverted into wrong channels. The young man had never learned the value of money because he had never earned a dollar in his life. But what was infinitely worse, though common enough under the circumstances, he did not know the value of a good name. He sailed around a great deal in the family yacht. He was a young man around town, and spent vast sums of money. His father earnestly protested against these wild dissipations, for he was very anxious to found a family which would go down into history, and this son was the only hope.

Silas insisted that the industrial operation known as sowing wild oats, must be undergone by every young man of fortune.

Otherwise what was the use of having money at all? Sometime he would settle down, enter Wall street, and show the "Governor" a thing or two. Meanwhile the Governor, rather anxious to be surprised by the fulfillment of this promise, could only wait and hope that the young man might eventually come to his senses, or in other words try every folly and get a surfeit. The only question was whether Silas's constitution could sustain the herculean task of harvesting such a luxuriant crop of oats. As to the money, there were no fears for that while Mr. Ingledee was alive to take care of it. There was so much of it that the spending would have fully done up a half dozen young men of the period, which is saying a great deal for Mr. Ingledee's financial standing.

The daughter was a being of a very different stamp. There was nothing at all remarkable in the fact that she abstained from dissipation, for that a relentless public opinion rightfully denies to women, while tacitly admitting it to be on the whole rather a cute performance on the part of a young man. In this case what is a palatable sauce for the demure young goose is a very insipid condiment for the frisky male bird. The shame belongs to society for tolerating such false notions of right. Chetta Ingledee had grown up without a mother. Her father paid little attention to her, partly because Silas caused many paternal anxieties, but chiefly because she was a girl, and a girl could not perpetuate the name of Ingledee, which he fondly hoped would some day be known still better, and in connection with still greater achievements, possibly in the arena of politics as well as finance, since the railway king is always deeply interested in politics. For these reasons Chetta had been allowed to grow up pretty much as she pleased.

Her education in books had not been neglected, and her really superior intellect had readily assimilated and mastered all that is supposed to constitute a good education in the common acceptation. She loved music, and had fine attainments in that direction. She despised a smattering of anything, hence, did not dabble in any of the fashionable dillettanteisms of the day. She was a high-spirited girl, who not only loved to have her own way, but had it. Mr. Ingledee looked on with indifference, for he thought her a very good girl, considering that girls were an inferior production of nature, whose chief mission is to be married, suitably or unsuitably. He knew that her handsome face, fine form, and attractive man-

ners with the potent inducement of princely dowry, would secure her the best husband going at any time.

In person Chetta Ingledee resembled her father. She was above the medium height, possessing a better physique than most young women, bred amid the fashionable absurdities which money commands. She had dark hair, liquid black eyes and a clear complexion, the result of vigorous health and abundant exercise. She was not afraid to walk a mile or two, in this respect being totally unlike those fashionable incapables, who will order out the carriage to go two blocks, or stop a street car, if they chance to enter that plebeian conveyance, for one block. Chetta's well-rounded, but prominent chin and full cherry lips, indicated a tendency toward voluptuous tastes. Her rather wide nose, the least bit turned up, indicated the same.

Altogether, her face would be called handsome, it certainly was striking, especially when her eye assumed a peculiar penetrating gaze, which plainly warned the world from attempting to trifle with its possessor. Wealth had not spoiled her as it spoils an inferior nature. She despised mere display, was unaffected in manner and kind of heart. As her time and actions were absolutely at her own disposal, this kindness and irrepressible flow of animal spirits caused her to do things, sometimes, which her aristocratic friends called "queer." Had her father been worth only a quarter of a million in lieu of his many millions, these freaks would have been pronounced "singular." Had he been a poor man struggling along on one hundred thousand, they would have been called "unladylike," and might have resulted in Chetta's being "cut" by the female plutocrats who make and unmake society. One of these eccentricities was the teaching of a class of ragged boys in a mission school. These urchins consisted of newsboys, ragpickers and the children of the very poorest people—outcasts who, in the midst of the highest civilization, sink through misfortune and improvidence below the level of the savage.

CHAPTER II.

THE TWINS HAVE A "INVITE INTER HIGH SOCIETY."

One morning after a late breakfast, Mr. Ingledee lingered at the table over his paper, hoping to see his son Silas before going down town to the office. He was a hard worker still and put in nearly as many hours per day at the office, as he did when he first began operations in Wall street. Hence the son, who breakfasted late, or oftener failed to take that meal at all through late rising, seldom sipped his coffee under the parental eye. Silas, who had not appeared for several days, at length entered the room, having received a polite request to that effect, which he facetiously termed an "appointment." He was dressed in a neat morning suit; his linen was in perfect condition but less must be said for the young gentleman himself. His eyes, and the lack of freshness in his complexion, together with a slight tremor of his hand as he opened a letter, plainly indicated wine and very late hours, if by any chronological reversion four or five in the morning can be called late.

"Good-morning, father."

"Good-morning, Silas," said Mr. Ingledee, peering cautiously over the paper, for much as he detested his son's course, he loved him too deeply to hurt his feelings, by even the appearance of scanning his person.

"You are almost a stranger at the breakfast table lately."

"Yes, society has been rather active for the opening of the season, and if one keeps in the swim, he must naturally consume a good deal of time, and some of that time must be squandered in sleep, and that is doubtless the reason of our having a forenoon." He spoke of sleep as if it were a very inconvenient necessity, and added: "You know nothing about all that of course."

"Thank heaven I do not! My son, haven't you been in the swim about long enough?"

"Oh no," said Silas, making a careless attempt on a muf-

fin. "You know I'm only twenty-two, and at my age a man is good for several years more of this sort of thing." He spoke this in a sneering sort of way, as if it were a light thing for a man to measure out the priceless years of youth which he could devote to sin, estimating them only by his own capacity of bodily endurance. And these were the years so pregnant with future happiness or misery. In youth every day gained is a treasure, every day lost an adder laid away in the bosom. The remark was so deliberate in tone, and showed such an utter lack of any appreciation of the value of true manhood, that, for the first time in his life, Mr. Ingledee's heart sank over the prospects of his son. He had long hoped, remonstrated and waited in vain. The end of all his hopes was now plainly in view unless something could be done soon.

While Mr. Ingledee was grieved to the heart, he was also very indignant. He had been brought up in the good old way, which taught that the night was made for sleep and the day for labor. The son believed, or acted as if he believed, that the night was for pleasure, the hardest of all labor, and the day, or part of it, for taking such unrefreshing slumber as could be obtained under these unnatural conditions. It nettled Mr. Ingledee to think that a son of his should so far violate a canon of that common sense which he flattered himself was a family characteristic. It was high time to teach this young man a lesson. He had begun twenty years too late.

"Silas, from time to time I have expressed disapproval of your course. I am not pleased with your conduct."

"I am sorry, father." This remark was a part of the conventional requirements of etiquette. It meant nothing, and the father knew its emptiness as well as the son.

"It is high time you gave less attention to society and champagne suppers and turned to business. I shall fit up an apartment for you in our offices."

"That will be quite unnecessary."

"I insist upon it," said Mr. Ingledee, showing the least trifle of heat at his son's provoking coolness.

"Really, father, I hope you will not press this disagreeable subject. I have often announced my intention of going into the office in due time."

"What do you consider due time?"

"After I've seen the world."

"What will the world say of your conduct, sir?"

"Of my conduct?" replied Silas, with a show of surprise. "I've done nothing extraordinary. If the world thinks about me at all, doubtless it will think my conduct the proper thing for a young man of fortune." With exasperating method, he rang the bell and ordered the servant to take away his cup of coffee which had grown cold, and bring him a fresh one. Mr. Ingledee felt himself beaten. He, the man who had come off victorious in a thousand financial struggles, who had made and unmade scores of men, who had controlled the commerce of entire states with a high hand, who had made a name which had penetrated to every part of the civilized world, he, with his mighty millions, was vanquished by his own son, a boy of twenty-two. But he determined on one more effort:

"Is not the society of your own family worth cultivating?"

"The society of my family is, I believe, considered unexceptionable."

"I scarcely ever see you of late; your sister scarcely ever sees you."

"Chetta has many friends and her own amusements; she does not seek my society. She is sensible, for why should brother and sister bore each other with commonplace affairs?" As Silas's blunt view of family relations was the legitimate fruit of all Mr. Ingledee's policy with regard to the uselessness of a daughter when a family name was to be perpetuated, the father could not well complain. There was a short pause as if neither party to the conversation cared to venture the first remark. After the space of a minute, Silas quietly added:

"As to seeing me, father, you know you can always do that by appointment." This was too much for Mr. Ingledee. His wrath was at white heat, though he repressed it, seeing the uselessness of further discussion then.

"I shall continue this subject when we have more leisure," saying which he left the room and went directly to that of his daughter, which was an elegant apartment on the second floor. He was satisfied that something had gone seriously wrong with the family machinery, and he determined to right it.

As Mr. Ingledee knocked at Chetta's door, a sudden shuffling noise greeted his ears. After a brief space of time the noises ceased within. He knocked again, when Chetta's cheery, musical voice said, "Come in." Entering, he saw a

table spread with substantial food, plentifully garnished with cake, fruits and nuts. At first glance it might have seemed that the young lady had been breakfasting in her own room, although that was improbable, for she always partook of the family breakfast at earlier hours with her father. He paid no attention to the table, thinking she had been entertaining some little girls as she sometimes did. Mr. Ingledee, in his ill-humor, felt like finding fault with his daughter for not exerting a more wholesome influence over her wayward brother instead of wasting time on strangers. He unreasonably expected her to take a deep interest in that scapegrace and watch over him with a mother's care (she was nearly two years his senior), while father and son had both systematically neglected the sister, except so far as the formal civilities of everyday life went.

"My daughter, I wish to speak with you."

"Yes, papa."

"It concerns family matters. I am not satisfied with Silas."

"Why do you not speak to him?"

"I have done so repeatedly. I have just now been trying to show him the wrong of wasting youth and its infinite possibilities in folly. But he sees things in a different light and, I regret to say, is not inclined to listen to advice." This last admission cost Mr. Ingledee an effort. It disparaged the male scion of the family who was everything, and the very fact of his confiding in his daughter gave some transient importance to the female scion, who was only a girl.

"What would you have me do, papa?"

"Try to have him more in your society. Woman's influence is a potent element in the formation of character." Chetta laughed a little incredulous, half-contemptuous laugh which nettled her father, and added:

"My brother has already seen a great deal of woman's society."

Mr. Ingledee frowned and replied: "True, but he has associated only with those silly creatures of fashionable society who have neither brains nor healthy instincts." He might have named a worse class of women also, but he stopped short. "I wish you to wield a sister's influence, and, if possible, elevate his social standard."

"If he loved a sensible woman she might save him."

"Chetta, that is nonsense. The only indication of com-

mon sense that I have seen in the young man is the fact that he has refrained from falling in love." A closer scrutiny of Silas Ingledee's career might have revealed the fact that he was too intent on selfish pleasures to fall in love with anything but himself and his vices.

"Please tell me what I must do, papa."

"Try to keep him at home a little. Interest him in your music. Take him into your set. Go with him oftener."

"Papa, he never asked me to go anywhere in his life. He finds more congenial society than that of a sister."

This astounding revelation was more than Mr. Ingledee expected, though he knew there was little in common between brother and sister. This aggressive, daring, unscrupulous man had for many years been piling his ample vaults full of stocks, bonds and mortgages. He had built up whole systems of railways, and wrecked other systems with as little compunction as he would have felt in crushing a spider. Meanwhile he had practically abandoned the domestic helm and had no right to be surprised that the family ship was drifting out of its course. He was very angry, and, consequently, unreasonable.

"Daughter, it is your own fault that your brother does not seek your society. You should make yourself agreeable to him. He wastes his time in folly and you waste yours indulging the caprices of an idle, romping girl. This nonsense must be stopped."

Chetta's eyes showed a slight gleam of dangerous fire as she replied, "Advise me, papa."

"My advice is that you settle down and take your place as the mistress of this house, and devote to domestic duties some of the time you now waste in gadding and nonsense."

Chetta was indignant; not at the wish of her father that she should take her place as mistress of the house; that pleased her active temperament, and she had the good sense to realize that the wealthiest ladies have domestic duties that can not properly be delegated to hired help; but she was stung to think that her father and natural counselor should accuse her of neglect of duty when he had never shown her a single duty. The charges of gadding and idling were intolerable. She seldom did anything without a purpose, and she despised mere inanity. With the quietest sarcasm she replied, "Papa, you are in a bad humor to-day."

Scolding betrays a contemptible weakness of disposition,

and both these persons had too much strength of character to scold. Mr. Ingledee restrained his rising passion.

"Chetta, I wish you to change entirely your mode of life, as an example to your brother. You indulge in caprices. I see evidences of that before me. You appear to be engaged in charity in breakfasting children in your room."

The word *appear* contained a covert sarcasm in the slight emphasis with which it was uttered.

"Papa, you forget. An Ingledee never *pretends*," replied Chetta, in a tone that plainly spoke defiance to his implied sneer. No possible reply could have touched him quicker. The reference to the Ingledee straight-forwardness, of which he made capital, was a home thrust.

"I had hoped so, my daughter, but why do you conceal those persons, whoever they may be? I plainly heard them enter that room."

"I conceal nothing. I invited here two boys from my Sunday-school class. They are not used to company, and persisted in running away. That is all."

Going to the door she called, "Pipe, come in and see papa."

A rare spectacle now met the astonished vision of Mr. Ingledee. From the side door emerged one of those nondescripts known as a newsboy. He was about twelve years old, but large and well developed for that age. He wore a man's Prince Albert coat, much the worse for wear, whose ample skirts dangled at his heels. For want of buttons this garment was securely and picturesquely fastened at the waist by a hempen string. A boot which yawned at the toe like the mouth of a cat-fish, and a woman's shoe constituted his foot gear. These, however, were carefully polished, thereby presenting a striking contrast to the street-mud brown of his pants. The latter garment had been newly patched with shiny black cloth on the knees, revealing the fact that Pipe Malley had a mother. Concerning the condition of the rear of the useful garment referred to, a modest silence is best, supplemented by Mrs. Malley's opinion: "Sure, Pipe, won't the tail av the coat cover them little holes? When they get big enough I'll see what they need."

The patches on the knees were the result of considerable importunity on the part of Pipe, the clinching argument in which was that "he had a invite inter high society, and had got to sling on a little style."

Pipe's check shirt, which had been lately washed, in consequence of aforesaid invite, was neatly fastened at the throat by a bit of red tape found at a ragpicker's, and the nearest approach Pipe had ever made to a tie. Vest, he had none; socks, he had none. He had made a heroic attempt to wash his face and hands, but the experiment was a partial failure resulting in that streaky appearance which might appropriately be termed marbling. This ineffectual attempt, however, gave a somewhat better view of his visage, which had been so long eclipsed. His features were not bad, with the exception of a big mouth and irregular teeth. His piercing black eyes indicated a decided disposition not "to be fooled with," to use one of Pipe's favorite expressions.

Mr. Malley had made an abortive attempt to paste his hair down on his forehead after the prevailing fashion of the genus "young gent."

Chetta having complimented him on this approach to high art, he replied laconically, "It's mighty expensive, I tell *you*. I done up a ten-cent comb a doin' up that hair."

On the appearance of this apparition amid his own highly respectable belongings, Mr. Ingledee's sense of humor got the better of his vexation, and he laughed outright. Pipe, with the assurance acquired in his calling, advanced to the center of the room and awaited developments.

"Papa, this is one of my Sunday-school boys, Mr. Pipe Malley."

The Pipe before her was so much superior to the Pipe she had first known some months before, that she was actually proud of him.

Mr. Ingledee's quick perceptions noticed this, but instead of feeling pleasure in the thought that his daughter was willing to endure a little trouble to advance the happiness of others, he regretted that her missionary efforts had not been expended at home in advancing the interests of the male Ingledees.

"You have a good teacher, Pipe."

"Bet yer boots—I mean yes, sir," said Pipe, with a dismal attempt at a bow, which consisted in scraping the cat-fish-jawed boot backward on the floor and twisting his body in that direction. This acrobatic feat made it impossible for him to face Mr. Ingledee. As Pipe had only one boot, the odds of the proposed wager would have been greatly in his favor. Chetta and Mr. Ingledee both laughed in spite of themselves.

"It is hard to avoid that expression, isn't it, Pipe," said Chetta, good-naturedly, trying to reassure him.

"You bet it is," replied Pipe, whose assurance had all vanished amid these strange surroundings, and for the first time in his life he was hopelessly embarassed.

Say only, "Yes sir, and yes ma'am."

"I forgot—I beg parding."

"Where is Quill?"

"He wouldn't come out o' that room. He's a goose."

Mr. Ingledee, to reassure the boy, asked: "Is it your brother who is in that room?"

"Yes sir, I'm twins."

"Oh, indeed! Chetta, call him." Chetta, going to the door, brought out Quill Malley, who had been industriously devouring a pocket full of nuts and cake taken from the table on the first alarm. Quill's mouth being full to repletion, the excitement of the occasion caused some of the food to stick in his windpipe, when a very animated fit of coughing ensued. Pipe promptly administered the heroic remedy of pounding him on the back with the seasonable advice: "Brace up, and don't give yerself away before the govenor." Quill was the exact counterpart of Pipe, though a scar on the cheek, which the latter acquired in a street fight, furnished a ready means of telling them apart. Quill's dress was less pretentious. Pipe had confidentially remarked to Chetta over his coffee:

"There's no use in Quill tryin' to catch onto the style; it ain't in him."

His personal appearance seemed to justify this observation. A very inadequate jacket which Pipe had cast off as too small, struggled vainly to cover the upper portion of Quill's person. His pants were much the same as Pipe's, because the same street mud had furnished color for both. One striking difference was apparent. They had holes in the knees, but were patched roughly but strongly behind with the same shiny black cloth which adorned Pipe's knees. Mrs. Malley, with timely investigation, had discovered that owing to the shortness of Quill's jacket patches on the rear of his pants might in "high society" be considered a necessity; whereas, patching the knees must be considered in the light of a luxury. Quill wore shoes which were so large that they clattered up and down at every step and were constantly being lost in the excitement of running down a customer. His attempt at washing had been still more unsuccessful than Pipe's. As to combing his head

that part of Quill's toilet had been entirely neglected probably from no fault of his, but from the fact that Pipe, who was always first in everything, and in the family vernacular "ruled the roost," had "done up" the family comb.

"Speak up, Quill, and don't make a guy of yerself s' if ye had never seen nothin'." As Quill had never seen anything like his present surroundings where a real "governor" was thrown in gratis, his astonishment could only be suitably expressed by a prolonged stare. Language was to him utterly inadequate.

The absurdity of the situation had at first amused Mr. Ingledee. But this millionaire, who was none too scrupulous in his great undertakings, thought, like most people in every rank of life, that it was best at times to be a stickler after little things. This weakness of mankind is one of the surest tests of character. Only a little soul will haggle over little things. Mr. Ingledee, the many fold millionaire, who almost swayed the finances of a continent, and who played with railway systems, as the angler plays with a struggling fish before landing him, had, with all his force of character, an exceedingly small soul animated by unworthy and ungenerous motives. He was the very incarnation of selfishness which is perhaps the most despicable of human vices. He lived, toiled and dreamed to pile up more millions, no matter how, and to keep them all in the family in the person of a worthless son. This moiling money-king might have given a thousand or two in charity any day, because other people gave, and because it was right to aid the worthy poor, but it was not the proper thing to have dirty newsboys and ragpickers feasting amid the splendors of the Ingledee mansion.

"Chetta," he said, with deliberation, "I am shocked at your low tastes. This sort of thing may do at the mission school, though it might better be left to others entirely. Could you not amuse yourself in some way consistent with womanly dignity? Almsgiving is very well, but such persons should be attended to at the kitchen door." This thrust touched Chetta's pride.

"Papa, you are mistaken. These boys are not here seeking alms. They belong to my Sunday-school class. They probably were never invited anywhere before in their lives, and I wished to give them a treat. They are human beings. Is there anything unwomanly in having a human feeling?"

"Certainly not, my daughter, but it should be exercised with discretion."

"Upon rich people who don't need it, I suppose?"

"As I said, the giving of alms is very necessary, but bringing tramps and beggars to the private table is another matter. It displeases me, and I hope it will never occur again." So saying, Mr. Ingledee walked from the room. The matter which had all at once so ruffled his sense of dignity, might have occurred fifty times without his knowing it, thanks to his neglect of family affairs.

Pipe Malley, who was really a lad of high spirit, had swallowed the allusion to beggars with a very bad grace. In fact, he was on the point of replying to the taunt when a warning look from Chetta prevented the execution of his intention. Quill, who cared for nothing else, while there was plenty to eat handy, was furtively consuming vast quantities of jelly cake. His efforts in that direction, though arduous, could not keep pace with his desires, and he aided his inadequate powers by occasionally straightening up his neck after the manner of a chicken swallowing dry meal. Pipe, happening to turn around toward the table, brought the zealous efforts of his brother to an abrupt close. Like many fond relatives, when they wish to say something particularly disagreeable he saw a chance to work off his ill-humor on his own blood.

"Quill, wot yer doin'? Leaf go that cake. Hain't yer no manners? Ye act as if ye'd never been in company afore."

In justification of Quill it must be admitted that his experiences in company were rather limited. The only occasion on which he had ever been invited out was years before, when his mother took tea with one Mrs. Riley, washerwoman. The twins, being of tender age, were necessarily included in the invitation. They played in the alley with Patsey Riley, while the mysterious process of tea went on, receiving each a huge slice of bread and butter and the drumstick of a chicken, at the back door, to stay a clamorous appetite until the second table was ready. Quill knew his brother too well to disobey a wish so explicitly put, and, though he was full to the nose, abandoned the table with a look of fond regret. Chetta now delicately intimated to the twins that she would show them out. As they were on the stairs, the street bell rang and the servant handed her a card inscribed, "Thomas Norwell."

"Show Mr. Norwell in."

Tom Norwell was a very old friend of Chetta's, who was privileged to call at any time. Being the son of a wealthy man he was a young gentleman of leisure, and as the evenings both of himself and Chetta were usually taken up by some society event, he had acquired the habit of making short calls during the day, and not infrequently in the forenoon. As Chetta was an early riser, there was no difficulty in finding her at home. Quill, on hearing the front door open, became panic stricken. He feared that the governor was returning, and had serious doubts as to what might be the intentions of that worthy should he discover this undesirable company still on his premises. Quill thought it best to beat a hasty retreat, and remembering that he came in the back way, determined to go out at the rear, as involving less publicity. He bolted back through the hallway, and in his precipitation lost one shoe, exposing a chocolate-colored foot. A shoe was not to be considered when personal safety was involved, and Quill kept on till his flight abruptly terminated in a small sitting-room at the end of the hall. Tom Norwell laughed heartily, but Chetta had seen so many freaks of the twins that it caused her no surprise.

"Miss Ingledee, are you training a circus troupe?"

"No, Mr. Norwell, I've had some company to a quiet breakfast—two of my class."

"Ah, delightfully original company, I should say."

"Very! I take great interest in studying characters so different from any I have been accustomed to."

Pipe Malley's sense of family dignity was again outraged by Quill's conduct. Making a run after the fugitive he brought him back triumphantly by the collar.

"Come up and be interduced. Wot ye runnin' away fur? An' one shoe off, too! I'm ashamed of ye, I am. I'll never make nothin' o' you."

The shoe was replaced by the humiliated and silent Quill, and the twins formed in line to be introduced.

"Mr. Norwell, allow me to introduce Mr. Pipe Malley, Mr. Quill Malley."

Pipe drew back the cat-fish boot much as the leg of a compass would move, and twisted his body stiffly to the right, at the same time nudging Quill, who, not having fully recovered from his panic, ducked his head several times excitedly, his actions resembling those of a goose in a hail storm. Of

course he overdid it, and Pipe was again mortified. He felt called upon to apologize for Quill.

"Miss Ingledee, if you please, ma'am, Quill is sort o' broke up. He ain't used to this kind o' thing, but I guess he'll come out all right."

Chetta kindly replied that she thought he would come out, while Quill mentally resolved he'd never come out again if he knew it. Like many other resolves of loftier purpose, this one was broken. It afterward went to pieces under the seductive influences of ice-cream and jelly cake. Chetta directed the servant to show out the twins, while she herself led the way into the parlor.

CHAPTER III.

THE MORAL ASPECTS OF A DOLLAR.

Mr. Norwell, Tom's father, lived in an aristocratic neighborhood on one of the up-town cross streets, and near Fifth avenue. The family mansion was a large, old-fashioned, red-brick house of homely exterior. Lest the impression may prevail from this statement that it was built by the Dutch settlers, the reader is reminded that people often go out of fashion in America in one year, houses in from two to ten. Nothing in its outward appearance distinguished it from dozens of other houses in that vicinity. Within, all its appointments showed it to be the home of a family of abundant means and excellent taste. The heavy carpets sank under the feet like the velvety moss in a deep forest. Costly pictures by artists of note adorned the walls of the spacious parlors and reception rooms. The library contained a large collection of valuable books selected, however, more with reference to their intrinsic worth than to rarity or the accidental merit of historical interest.

Mr. Norwell had made a fortune as a manufacturer, and some five years before the date at which this story begins, had retired from business to enjoy the fruits of his labor. He was a gentleman in the widest sense of the term. His intellectual faculties were decidedly above the average, and he passed for a well-informed man. But his wealth was the result more of a

fortunate combination of circumstances than from any remarkable degree of foresight, though he was a hard-working, careful man. A lucky hit in the manufacture of a certain line of popular goods, by a process hard to imitate, had made his fortune almost to his surprise.

Soon after Mr. Norwell's retirement from business, his wife died, and the family now consisted of himself, his son Tom, and a daughter, Alice. Tom was a big, hearty, good-humored fellow, six feet high, with a fine figure. His light hair was slightly inclined to curl. His eyes were a light blue, full of tenderness and expression. His well-developed chin was smoothly shaven, and his full lips parted, or had a tendency to part very slightly, indicating a love of pleasure and a lack of firmness. His nose was clearly cut and his forehead prominent, indicating more than average brain power. His flow of animal spirits, resulting from exuberant health, inclined him to an activity and restlessness scarcely to be expected in a young man whose only mission is to inherit and spend his father's money. Tom was so generous and so good natured that everybody liked him. He was the beau ideal of the ladies, for he possessed those qualities which, combined with youth and a handsome person, invariably make captive the female heart.

Alice Norwell was slightly above the medium height and had little resemblance to her brother. She had brown hair, a clear, beautiful brown eye, that carried conviction of honesty in its steady open expression, mouth rather large, lips clear cut but not full. Her mouth, which closed firmly when in repose, indicated decision and steadiness of purpose. Her delicately chiseled nose was large and inclined somewhat to the Roman type, with a good breadth of nostril. There was not the fraction of a grain of superfluous flesh about that very expressive adjunct to the human countenance. The forehead was rather too prominent to be considered beautiful in a woman. A prominent but well-rounded chin, the oval outline of the face and a pleasing expression saved their possessor from being called homely. Her expression was one of thoughtfulness and kindly interest.

Alice Norwell could not be called a handsome woman, yet the most fastidious connoisseur of female beauty would never have thought of calling her homely. She was a woman who could entertain intelligent people on most subjects, yet was no blue stocking. The young man of the period (I mean

the society young man who thinks the mission of the race is to waltz) would care little for her from the fact that the pitiable occupation of a fop disqualifies him from discriminating between the intellectual diamond and a very shabby paste imitation. His tastes all incline him toward the latter by a species of instinct, just as his wit never soars above a pun. This, doubtless, is in accordance with nature's universal law, that like always produces or selects like.

Miss Norwell understood all the recreations of high society. She danced well, she skated, she played a capital game of whist; if courtesy required it she could talk airy nothings after the fashion of the most assiduous prattlers, though she always reckoned time spent in such conversation, if conversation it may be called, as practically lost, so far as any useful purpose is concerned. She recognized one tangible result, the negative satisfaction that such exercise teaches us how silly mankind may become, and shows us, if we are not hopelessly sense blind, to avoid such depths of garrulous idiocy. One thing she could not do, she could not flirt. Though conscious of her power of pleasing many men, she confined that power to its legitimate scope.

She looked on that enticing social game in which the stakes are hearts (often the property of some one else) in its true light, as a social sin. For this and other reasons she looked upon Chetta Ingledee with secret mistrust, for she thought she discovered in that eccentric young lady a disposition to flirt, and worst of all, to flirt with her brother Tom. This was the cause of a growing dislike toward Chetta. For one woman to forage on the social or domestic preserves of another, brothers included in a lesser degree, is always an unpardonable offence in the eyes of that other. Alice had too much good sense to precipitate a rupture on insufficient grounds. Hence, the families of Ingledee and Norwell were still on good terms, in spite of the fact that Mr. Ingledee was a rising money king, with a great many millions, and Mr. Norwell a poor man with only two or three millions, and two children to support in the bargain.

At the present time there was visiting the family a young man, Arthur Wilson, who was the son of one of Mr. Norwell's old friends. His father had been brought up in the same neighborhood in New York State, in which Mr. Norwell lived when a boy. The latter had at an early age, come to the city to seek his fortune, and now the son of his former

friend, released from the ties of his native place by the death of his parents, had pursued the same course.

As Arthur Wilson plays a very important part in this history, the reader may as well know at once what manner of man he was. He was about twenty-two years of age, which perhaps is the most interesting period in the life of a man, potent as it is with unmeasured possibilities for good or evil. It is the age at which the springing powers of nature assert themselves in full force, and the youthful mind possesses a confidence which can be measured only by its inexperience. The young man is now freed from paternal restraint, and his self-conceit springs full armed like Minerva from the head of Jove. He thinks it the proper thing to have opinions on every subject, and very decided ones too. He imagines it enhances his social importance to be a little reckless, and occasionally he shocks his friends by fostering skepticism at the period when he begins to nurture a moustache. If home restraints have been irksome he is liable, in his new found liberty to gravitate dangerously near the opposite extreme of the social plane, and undo in a few years or months, the result of many years of anxious but mistaken parental care. On the other hand, no matter how aimless his life, if not criminal, the exuberant impulses of youth may be diverted into wholesome channels, and the scapegrace boy become the corner-stone of society as a man.

It was greatly in young Wilson's favor that he had been obliged to earn his own living. No school is so wholesome and efficient as the school of respectable poverty. The arduous labor and wholesome fare of farm life, had developed a physical and mental structure, which was a splendid capital in itself to begin life on. In person he was five feet eight, stoutly built with broad chest, and firm, well-turned limbs. He had very thick light hair, which inclined to stand up and straggle in defiance of propriety and comb. He had a keen gray eye, Grecian nose, firm mouth inclined to humor and a wide, round chin. He possessed a vigorous, well-trained will power, and large conscientiouness combined with a becoming dignity. A self-esteem which might have become obnoxious, under unfavorable conditions, had been well toned down under the hard knocks of adverse fortune. He had learned early, that it is hard for a poor boy to indulge in the pyrotechnic display, vulgarly known as setting the world on fire.

"Then you have determined definitely to settle in the city,

Arthur?" said Mr. Norwell, as the family and their guest sat at breakfast.

"Yes, it seems to me the country affords very poor opportunities for rising in the world. Father worked hard all his life on his little farm and then died poor."

"Yet you always had enough to eat and wear, and some good books to read?"

"Oh yes, we always had plenty of those things, but I hardly call that living."

"When a man goes beyond the necessaries and homely comforts of life, his wants are only a question of purse, inclination and caprice. It is just as easy, my boy, to spend twenty thousand per year as five thousand, and be no better off for it, too."

"I should like to be able to try it for awhile," said Wilson.

"I should get a great deal of fun out of it I'm sure," added Tom.

"And do a great many foolish things no doubt, Thomas," retorted Mr. Norwell. "I see Arthur, you have the orthodox American idea, that a man without money is hardly worth considering. It is a fallacy; honest poverty is infinitely more honorable than ill-gotten or criminally gotten wealth."

"A poor man is all well enough," said Tom, "but you know very well he amounts to nothing nowadays."

"That is from the rich man's standpoint," quietly replied Alice.

"From any standpoint you choose. I mean to make a fortune early in life."

"It is hard work, Thomas, and usually it does not come early," said Mr. Norwell. "You will have a competence if you only take care of it. As a rule the mere drudgery, rivalry, and selfishness necessary to acquiring a fortune, crush out most of the desirable qualities of manhood, and render the attainment of a high ideal impossible. Arthur, my advice is go back to the country. You may never be a rich man, but you will always be sure of honor and a competence by reasonable effort. The country is nature's smiling workshop, the city is a vast treadmill, where every toiler is a beast of burden chained to his post. In the country the self-respecting poor man is an esteemed member of society. The alluring pleasures of city society are not for the poor man, nor even for the man of moderate means. You have read with envy doubtless, of the brilliant receptions, balls and doings of the gay in-

habitants of Gotham. The people who can afford all that are a small number compared with the toiling thousands. Only a golden key will unlock the doors of these abodes of elegant pleasure, and then you will find them vanity and disappointment. It's hard work, and the game isn't worth the candle. Stick to the country."

"Father, this vanity you speak of is a very popular one at least. I intend to show Arthur some of it."

"And I'll show him its silliness," added Alice. "You needn't think, Tom, you are going to monopolize our guest."

"He has no notion to try your philosophy now, sister. Have you, Wilson?"

"I should be glad to study all phases of city life, and I flatter myself that my wish may be gratified under such competent guidance as that of yourself and Miss Norwell."

"If you really conclude to try your fortune here," said Mr. Norwell, "I think I can get you something to do. I have shown you the worst side to begin on, you know."

"And it seems to me you have stated it very unfairly," added Tom. "Look at the vast fortunes made in cities. Look at Mr. Ophir, your old friend."

"Thomas, there is only one Ophir." In explanation it may be said that Mr. Ophir had also sprung from a farmer's family. He, while a boy, had quitted the farm and after engaging in various respectable occupations, had finally gravitated to the level of a railroad-stock manipulator with the most unexampled success. He now owned more railroads than his own poor old father had ever owned cows.

"Where there is one Ophir, there may be two."

"I hope not, Thomas; one is quite sufficient. In fact, I think the country would be better off if none had ever existed."

"Look at Ingledee, too."

"Tom," Alice quietly interposed, "your examples are far fetched and absurd. Mr. Wilson certainly would not think of engaging in any business subject to such fluctuations and uncertainties as stock gambling. Nobody would."

"Plenty of people do," replied Tom. "There is stacks of money to be made in Wall street, and I shall enter it myself some day."

"Better keep out, my son. It is all a lottery, and the best of them go to the wall sooner or later. Money won unfairly always proves a curse to its possessor. The trite adage, Money is the root of all evil, is a trite falsehood. Money earned in

legitimate ways is, if I may employ such a figure, preserved labor. We take a portion of it from our store, and use it when needed, as we would use a can of fruit preserved for a similar purpose. If labor be man's chiefest blessing, then such money is wholly a blessing, for it is only another form of labor."

"It is the money we are after nowadays, father, and if we can make in Wall street in a few days what formerly required years of toil, what is the odds, so we have the money?"

"You forget, Thomas, that the moral influences pertaining to a dollar are of infinitely greater value than the dollar itself."

The moral aspect of a dollar! Tom laughed heartily at the idea. This young man had been taught to attend church regularly, and to pray at his mother's knee as a child. He had handled many dollars and spent still more, but here was presented a new and totally unexpected aspect of this useful and exceedingly attractive coin. The moral aspects of a dollar! He was inclined to jocularity, and laughed again.

"Father, when I find an unusually moral dollar I intend to take it into Wall street as a curiosity."

"Go into the street as an operator and get out with sound morals, and you will have accomplished the same object," said Mr. Norwell drily.

"Remember, Tom," said Wilson, "that a waste of morals accompanies a waste of dollars."

"So on our explorations, we'll save both," added Tom.

"The idea of two young men seeing New York under such parsimonious conditions," observed Alice satirically.

"By the way, father," queried Tom, "have you made any arrangements with Mr. Ophir yet, concerning those Continental and Pacific bonds and stocks? From all appearances they are the best thing ever offered to the public."

"I shall see him to-day about the matter. Ophir is very sure that they are just what I want for permanent investment."

"Papa, have you never thought that Mr. Ophir is himself the leader in Wall street?"

"Certainly, Alice. I also remember that he is my old personal friend; that I have helped him out of many a difficulty in the old days, and that he has helped me more than once. I can rely on John Ophir, though others have cause of complaint. Now, children," said Mr. Norwell, rising from

the table, "I shall expect you to make Mr. Wilson feel at home. Your forces are ample for the occasion. In seeing New York as it is, you will not need the aid of an old-fashioned chap like me."

"I shall draw on you unsparingly, nevertheless," said Arthur, with a pleasant smile.

"We two can get along famously," Tom added, thoughtlessly, forgetting that he had a sister.

That sister had no notion of being quietly ignored in that fashion. With a quizzical glance which rebuked Tom's thoughtlessness, she asked:

"May I not offer my assistance?"

"I shall be only to glad to accept it," Wilson replied, before Tom could say a word. The company now broke up. Tom and Arthur took a run around town where everything was new to the latter. Mr. Norwell ordered his carriage with a view to driving down town, and interviewing Mr. Ophir.

CHAPTER IV.

SOWING THE WIND.

That great man, Ophir, so great in notoriety, was not a striking personage to behold. He was not above medium size. His head was large and long, both literally and figuratively. His quick, restless gray eye which was shaded by a queer, spiny-looking brow, was as pitiless as a serpent's, and betrayed no more emotion than does the eye of a fish. Its calm deliberate gaze revealed no secrets, while you instinctively felt that it read your thoughts. His nose was long and sharp; his chin slightly turned up to meet it; his face was covered by a thick black beard carefully trimmed.

Mr. Ophir was plainly dressed in a neat business suit of brown cassimere. Beyond a heavy gold watch and chain, he wore no jewelry whatever. Mr. Ophir had other more effective ways of advertising himself than the cheap one of showy dress. His office and its furniture were in keeping with the man. A serviceable carpet covered the floor. A very large walnut desk, which had a multiplicity of pigeon-holes, numerous letter files, a few comfortable chairs, and a bookcase contain-

ing chiefly volumes of statistics, commercial reports and necessary works of reference, constituted the furniture. Over his desk was a beautiful model of his fast-sailing steam yacht, one of the fastest ever built, and in every way the pride of a man who controlled so much steam in an age of steam. Everything in the office was substantial, and all, including the yacht which represented a gigantic advertisement, subserved one object—business.

Mr. Ophir had been a country boy. He knew what poverty was and he knew what hard work was. Though his wealth was variously estimated at from fifty to seventy-five millions, he was to be found at his desk in his private office, or closeted with his brokers in the vicinity during business hours most of the time, unless when absent from the city looking after his numerous great railway properties. He was still in fact a hard worker though so very rich, and it was a common remark among his clerks that he could accomplish more work in a given time under pressure than any man among them. The instinct of accumulation is an appetite that never feels satiety, but whets on a surfeit of food. Coupled with ambition, it drove this delving slave daily to the task of piling his great pyramid a little higher.

The strain upon the great stock operator, or gambler, if the reader prefers the plainer term, during periods of unusual excitement in the markets, is something tremendous and almost inconceivable to the uninitiated. With immense interests at stake, perhaps mounting into millions, and the possibility that the fluctuations of a day or even an hour may make or unmake fortunes, the strain upon the human machines involved in these tremendous operations is something terrific. Compared with life at such a time the existence of the galley-slave may be envied. He, poor wretch, feels that whatever may happen, nothing worse can befall him while the dealer in "options" may be compelled to sit down, not calmly, for that is impossible, but despairingly, and see a remorseless turn of the market consume his fortune to the last penny.

Nay, it does not always stop there, but often leaves the miserable incubus of a debt which he can never repay. He may kiss his smiling wife and prattling babes a fond adieu in the morning, with the self-satisfaction of a man worth one hundred thousand dollars, and at night drag his wretched steps through the door of his beautiful home with a debt of one

hundred thousand dollars. There is to him sometimes one of those compensations with which nature alleviates nearly every great evil. The very character of his operations often so deadens his finer sense of honor, if he ever had any, that he looks with indifference on the debt remaining and reserves his laments for the money gone forever. Speculation is a hideous cancer on modern civilization, that eats up not only bodily substance, but honor as well.

Mr. Ophir was a man among millions for the business. A great nation of fifty millions, fortunately, has produced but four or five like him, and none so successful. He often lost, as a matter of course, but he did not whine over his losses. Instead, he quietly and warily laid his plans for accomplishing that anatomic feat surgically known in Wall street as "taking the hides" of his opponents. Another of nature's compensations may here be remarked. Wall street operators, like eels, are used to being skinned. The country, though pretty well used to it, too, shows symptoms of raising serious objections.

As Mr. Norwell entered the corridor of the building in which Ophir's offices were situated, he noticed a powerful Italian lounging about without any apparent purpose. This fellow was a giant in build, with the strength of an ox, and the dangerous stealth of a tiger. He carefully scanned each visitor, though appearing to see nothing, out of little coal-black eyes hid under shaggy brows. Mr. Norwell presented his card to the usher, who, seeing Ophir's well-known signature, naming an appointment at the hour which had just struck, at once admitted him to the presence of the great Ophir. At the same time the burly Italian quietly slipped into the outer reception-room, and seating himself, industriously read a paper. Who was this mysterious man? Only Mr. Ophir's shadow—a very substantial one, who followed him everywhere, lest some of the aforesaid gentlemen whose cuticle had been removed, perhaps with insufficient gentleness, should offer the anatomist personal attentions of an unpleasant nature. Such is the divinity that hedges round a railway king. Ophir greeted his old friend with great cordiality.

"Good-morning, Norwell. How are you?"

"First rate, Ophir, first rate."

"I'm glad to see you. I envy your happiness since you retired from business. For old friends we see little of each other."

"I am sorry for that, too, Ophir, for after all there are no friends quite so near as early friends."

"Yes, it takes twenty years to make a friend, and old fellows like ourselves haven't the time. We make only acquaintances."

"Why don't you retire from business, too, and take life easy. You have money enough."

"In my position that is very hard to do. Of course I care nothing for more money. But the love of the business grows, and really I think I see opportunity for two or three crowning achievements yet before I quit. But," he added abruptly, "we are wasting time. You wanted information concerning Continental and Pacific, I believe?"

"Yes, and I have called on you as an old friend for inside facts. Is it a good thing and a safe thing?"

"It is the best thing in the market. As an evidence of my faith in it, I will say that I control nearly a third of the whole stock, and own a very large holding of its bonds. Chrysolite is also largely interested. I will give you a few details. As you are aware the government grants us a large bonus in bonds. In the mountain portions this bonus is doubled, and for one hundred and fifty miles over the crest trebled." Mr. Ophir added with refreshing naivete, "We hope to be able to get a bill through Congress authorizing us to issue our own bonds for at least an equal amount, giving them precedence over the government lien as a first mortgage on the road. We shall also try to get the land grant doubled. This bill, of course, is not absolutely certain to pass, but we hope to convince Congress of the desirability of such action."

The private arguments employed to influence Congressmen by Mr. Ophir and his fellow-conspirators of the Midland Pacific, are a matter of surmise, almost reaching proof positive; that they carried their point is a matter of history. The new bill passed in due time, and by its provisions many millions of dollars and several additional million acres of land were absolutely given to these great corporations. Mr. Norwell thought he was beginning to see inside facts.

It may be remarked here, though a rather obvious deduction, that when a man in such cases applies for "inside" facts with the previous belief that there may be money made from such knowledge, he has taken the first step toward reconciling himself to those facts, and, indeed, toward getting on the inside himself as speedily as possible. Mr. Norwell had no

dishonorable motive whatever. He would have scorned to take advantage of any one. It had merely been hinted to him that some one was going to make a great deal of money out of this colossal railway enterprise. If it was to be made, and he could do it legitimately, he would take his share. But he was hardly prepared for so refreshing a statement of the case. He had some questions to ask. Mr. Ophir, who seldom mistook his man, was ready to answer:

"May not the opposition in Congress inquire into this matter? What will the papers say?"

"Doubtless there will be some debate in Congress, and some objections. There always are. But the people will not understand the question any further than that there was a great deal of speech-making." Such, it must be confessed, is too often the case. The people think that the Honorable Blank had a very lively tilt with the Honorable Shank, whose obstruction tactics became disagreeable, and that Blank effectively sat upon Shank, completely demoralizing the opposition, to Blank's great credit as a patriot and a statesman. That is all the people usually know about the matter, or care either. "As to the papers," continued Ophir, "that is managed very easily. The country papers take their cue from the great city dailies. I think I can keep things all smooth through my influence with the Daily Planet. In fact, I don't mind telling you confidentially that I own a majority of the stock of the Planet."

"Oh, I see! The Planet will puff the Continental and Pacific, and the public will swallow the puff."

"That's about it, only the articles relating to this great national highway will be too solid, and well written to be described by the somewhat objectionable term you have just applied to them. The staff of the Planet are men of brains. The argument which will be relied on chiefly, is the obvious fact that our road is a great national necessity." Mr. Ophir used the pronoun *our*, referring to this "great national necessity," much as if he had been referring to his house or his children. He was furtively putting salt on the tail of this magnificent bird, the C. & P., and hoped some time to have him securely in his own private cage.

"Ophir, who has charge of your interests in Congress?"

"The Honorable Dave Sawder." (The Hon. Dave was member for one of the city districts.) "He is just the man. We can rely on him to carry the measure through. He is

very popular with the people, chiefly through his scathing attacks on the minority. This alone will just now insure his influence with the majority. The minority never fail to put their heads in the noose. All they need to hang themselves, is plenty of rope. That, Sawder and two or three others will pay out liberally. But while he lashes the opposition mercilessly in public he is on very good terms with some of them in private. His motto is, 'Votes, not men.'"

"I for one, and, in fact, I think nearly everybody look on this road as a necessity. Then, why is so much wire pulling necessary to get it through?"

"Norwell, the difficulty is this. While all agree that the road is a necessity there are differences of opinion, *honest* differences, understand," he added, with childlike simplicity, "about the amount of bonds to be granted and the extent of the land grant, the repayment of the subsidy, etc., etc. These latter points are what we must look to. You see—and this is strictly inside information in confidence—we figure that the amount of bonds granted by the government, together with our own authorized bonds, will about build the road, leaving us all the stock of the company and the lands free. Sawder, with two or three other reliable men in the House, will, with Senator Sublet and others in the Senate, see to the passage of this measure, whereby the government will be a deferred creditor, instead of sole-preferred creditor, as arranged in the original act. Now this is the point of most interest to us. When the amended act is passed, as it certainly will, our fifty to sixty millions of stock will jump well toward par at once, and as the government builds the road for us, we have the stock and some ten to fifteen million acres of public lands for nothing.* Isn't that a pretty good thing?" It would have been a very unreasonable man who would have complained of such a thing. Ophir added, "But these are strictly *inside* facts in confidence, Norwell."

It was useless to reiterate this caution; Norwell was himself on the inside now. After a long life of rectitude and honorable business enterprise, his own weak spot was touched. Such a weak spot exists in every man, though some escape probing. Mr. Norwell saw that a scheme was afoot to make a great deal of money out of the public. He knew that such schemes were nearly sure to go through at that particular

*See extract from Senator Booth's speech, Note 2.

time, when the public attention was attracted toward the great struggle of the nation for existence. He realized that a wrong was to be done, but also realized that any influence he could bring to bear would be as futile as an attempt to fly a kite in a cyclone. Why not make some money out of it? He would do it. With none of Ophir's reckless disregard of public rights, he still had misgivings.

"Ophir, will the public stand this thing?"

"The public are d—d fools!"

"Granting that, will they not some time awake from their lethargy when the facts are known?"

"Possibly, but that will not be soon. Meantime ten years is all we want to get out of the market. While times are good, and everybody making money, who cares to inquire *how* it is made, so long as he gets plenty."

"I think there will be a day of reckoning."

"Not soon. This plan of railroad building (Ophir spoke of it as if it had been a great benevolent scheme instead of a colossal infamy) is in its infancy. I think there will be twenty years of it, but ten or even five will enable us to get from under." Then Mr. Ophir diverted the conversation for a moment by telling a little story by way of illustration.

"Norwell, do you remember Bob Snodgrass who used to go to school in our old home district?"

"Perfectly well! His red hair stuck out like a feather duster, and looked like the rising sun in a hazy December morning."

"Yes," replied Ophir, laughing, "and you also remember that old teacher by the name of Hixon?"

"Yes, thin as a shingle."

"And used to wear two pairs of spectacles sometimes, one pair forgotten on his forehead, and another pair on duty."

"And a huge mouse-colored neckcloth which made him look as if he had tried to hang himself with the bedquilt, and had been cut down before the act was accomplished."

"Yes, yes. Well, you know Bob Snodgrass used to worry that old man till life was a burden to him. He put a sucking pig into Hixon's desk; he drew uncomplimentary pictures of the master on the blackboard; he shut a big dog under the floor. The dog's scratching and panting scared the little folks nearly into fits. Remember that?"

"I remember it all."

"Well, you know, Bob used to keep that up all the week till Friday afternoon, then he invariably staid out of school, and all the rest of us got a good, old-fashioned flogging, which was Hixon's way of balancing the week's score, run up chiefly by Bob. Now when the people get wakened up and proceed to settle old scores, we'll be absent. Don't you see?"

This was so simple a piece of logic that anybody could see it. Norwell's last query was a very pertinent one.

"If this is such a good thing, why don't you and Oakesworth and Chrysolite keep it all yourselves?"

"There's so much of it, we can't." This laconic reply went so directly to the point, which Mr. Ophir could reach most happily when he chose, that Mr. Norwell, at once unburdening his mind of any special friendly interest on Ophir's part, or obligation on his own, replied:

"I'll take a block of the stock. Say one thousand shares."

"Pshaw, man; I've calculated on your taking ten thousand shares."

"At sixty-five that is six hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I could not raise that easily."

"We do those things differently. Put up a *margin* of five dollars per share, and wait till Sawder's bill passes. Then your stock will go to seventy-five at once."

"Is that margin safe in case of a drop?"

"It can't drop with the government back of it. Leave that to Sawder and to Senator Sublet. See the men who are in it. Look at Oakesworth, Bullion and Chrysolite."

All these men had, at that time, a good reputation. Had Mr. Norwell lived to see the unenviable notoriety some of them achieved a few years later, he might have arrived at the conclusion that the very fact of these men being in any enterprise was a cogent reason why other people should stay out.

"I will take ten thousand shares. I'll bring my check to-morrow or the day after."

Thus did these two men close a bargain nominally involving a million dollars with less dickering than many people would exercise in buying a pair of shoes or selling a calf.

In recommending this venture to his friend, Ophir was probably as honest as he ever was or could be in any of his great transactions. He really thought that the Continental

and Pacific would be as good as he predicted. The game was actually so immense that he and his grasping colleagues were obliged to call in outside assistance to bag it. Furthermore, the lobby in full operation at Washington, besides a good deal of Continental and Pacific stock which quietly passed into the pockets of members without tangible equivalent, was consuming a mint of money just then which Ophir and his fellow conspirators did not care to risk alone. Mr. Norwell and a few others had money. The great Continental and Pacific wanted money now with full assurance of a golden harvest in the future. If things went well it would be well for all; if not, it would not hurt Ophir and target practice is a cheap amusement when other people furnish the powder.

CHAPTER V.

MR. ROKER'S LITTLE SCHEME.

The Argosy Club is one of the many social institutions of New York City. The word club, like charity, covers a multitude of purposes. There are literary clubs, musical clubs, dancing clubs, polo clubs, etc. But the club of which the Argosy was a type is altogether a different affair. It is a place where a man may go to read, smoke, lounge, eat, drink, play, talk or sleep if he chooses. All these things are expensive in a great city, and the member of a popular club to be happy must have plenty of money. In consequence he is a man of some importance. Personally he may consist of a row of ciphers, but his bank and his club are the significant figures that make greatness out of littleness. A club is a place where many men spend selfishly that time which they should devote to their wives and children in cultivating the homely domestic virtues so often neglected by fashionable society. The members of the Argosy Club were the cream of the moneyed aristocracy of Manhattan Island. A millionaire was the smallest possible fish allowed to sport in that Pactolian pool, excepting a favored few who were intimately connected with millionaires. On these a saving grace had

been bestowed by proxy, just as a little man slips readily through a crowd following in the wake of a big burly man.

We will take a look at a few of the members, some of whom will play important parts in this history. Mr. Ingledee's name was on the club roll, also that of Mr. Bullion, Mr. Chrysolite, Mr. Crassus and others with whom we have nothing to do. Mr. Ophir was not a member. That great and good man had a large family, and, contrary to Mr. Ingledee's custom, delighted to enjoy their society and indulge in domestic endearments. A prominent member was Mr. Amaziah Snicker, a red-faced fat man who, to use his own threadbare simile, had once "scooped a million out of sugar." He delighted to tell how this remarkable feat had been accomplished, the narrative indicating by the complacent self-conceit which lurked in every word, tone and gesture, that no other man could possibly have carried so great a transaction to a successful issue.

His son, Frederick Snicker, was a dude,—that fantastic object of pity which springs up on the acme of the wave of civilization just before it begins to sink into semi-barbarism. This creature has flourished in all highly-civilized countries, and the citizens of the United States may now gaze upon him as he takes root in the democratic soil of America. This latest flower of civilization, heretofore an exotic, we may now safely call our own. He is essentially the gift of Europe, the region whence we obtain the English sparrow, the Norway rat, numerous bugs of various degrees of disagreeableness, and a host of hungry adventurers of all sorts. We may now breathe freer in our mad race of progress. We have entered into competition with the effete old world in another branch of industry, and have as usual carried off the palm, for our dude is the prince of all dudes. He is a combination of idiotic conceits, tight pants and patchouly. He will have a wholesome example on the manhood of America by showing what a contemptible thing an unsexed man is. Let no impious tongue, forgetting scriptural injunctions, say that this remarkable creature was made in vain.

On the evening to which the present events may be traced, Frederick Snicker with a companion lounged into the smoking room of the Argosy Club. He had the air of a man who believes, or affects to believe, all things trivial and unworthy of attention, and life a great bore, to be endured much as a faithful, patient wife endures a lazy, selfish lout of

a husband, simply because it is inconvenient to get rid of him.

Young Snicker had a soft, creamy complexion, and a pretty little pet of a waxed mustache, which held about the same proportions to a real mustache that the diminutive ground pine does to the majestic, real pine. This microscopic hirsute appendage added little to the commanding expression commonly supposed to be inherent in the human countenance as distinguished from all other animated nature. I refer particularly to that phase of it which is reputed to be able to quell the lion's rising ire. This expression was further depreciated by the effect of an insignificant little snub nose and a chin which modestly retreated into the recesses of his not very ample lower jaw. The ambitious jaw, in attempting to swallow the unpretentious chin, had overdone itself, and the failure caused irreparable damage to both.

Snicker's waist, so unlike the paternal waist, was carefully kept in proper bounds by stays. His lower limbs,—he would have been painfully shocked had they been referred to as legs,—were encased in very tight, striped pantaloons of delicate hues. Nature had not been very lavish with respect to Snicker's lower extremities, and the tailor had been still more parsimonious. As a consequence, the spectator was in constant apprehension lest these very inadequate supports should suddenly give way and bring disaster to their owner. They were assisted, however, in a slight degree, by a tiny little flexible cane about large enough for a penholder, which was surmounted by a dog's head carved in ivory. He twirled this cane so incessantly that the poor puppy in ivory must have been in a chronic condition of dizziness and indignation, if capable of reasoning, at this particular species of activity in his biped associate. An eyeglass, when not in use to obscure vision, dangled on his waistcoat suspended by a silken cord. Young Snicker dropped into an easy chair with the air of a man who feels that resignation is all that is left him in the world, and endurance must soon reach its limit. He remarked to his companion, with a drawling lisp which he had by frequent private rehearsals brought to a state of perfection:

"Weally, Roker, this is vewy unpleasant."

"What is unpleasant?"

"My flowist made another howid mistake. I always want a wose for my buttonhole on Tuesday evening. He sent me instead a fuschia and twimmings, and among the

twimmings was a howid fish gewanium leaf. Now you know I cawn't abide fish any way."

"Throw away the geranium leaf."

"Weally, this howid hot weathah has so unnerved me that I do not feel like twying to awange a bouquet."

"Going to see Luseba to-night, the reason you are so particular, Snicker?"

"Pon my wud now, Roker, that allusion is not quite genewous."

"What's up now?"

"That's all ended," replied Snicker, with a sigh as deep as his corset would allow.

"Another heart broken?"

"Naw!" This particle of grammar intended for no was spoken in a prolonged drawling circumflex, as if paucity of ideas compelled him to fill the intervals between them with remarkable vocalization. He added lazily: "Partnehship dissolved by mutual consent. One more experience."

Poor little creature! He said this as if he were trying to get through with all experiences,—that is, all proper for a gentleman of his cut,—and graduate into the indifferent man of the world as soon as possible, with nothing more to do, nothing more to learn, nothing more to enjoy,—only to be bored with resignation. Now Luseba Aplington was a young lady whose highly artificial accomplishments were as shallow as his own, else he had never discovered them. After a brief, sappy courtship, they plighted troth. But the course of true love will not run smooth though flowing in a golden channel. One evening, on the way to the opera, Miss Luseba confided a valuable opera-glass to the care of her Adonis. He, not feeling equal to assuming such a grave responsibility, intrusted it to the footman, which functionary lost it. It was a birthday present from a dear friend, and the young lady was inconsolable. The fact that Snicker himself remained hers failed to allay her unreasonable grief. A coolness arose. She returned his presents and his heart, in exchange for which organ she received her own again, neither but little the worse for wear, because, like shoes that have been worn, both had already had the squeak taken out of them by considerable indulgence in Cupid's game of foot ball. To employ Snicker's own resigned expression, "it was all over." To jest with a man who had suffered such a poignant grief was cruel, and Roker dropped the subject.

Snicker's companion, Horace Roker, was in everything his opposite. He was a tall, compactly-built, rather spare, dark-complexioned man. He was very straight, considering that he had labored for years at a desk in Ingledee's office. His thin, Roman nose, prominent forehead, lowering brow, and lips almost painfully compressed, indicated inflexibility of purpose, combined with a dangerous temper disposed to cruelty. His restless, piercing black eye seldom squarely met the eye of one with whom he conversed, unless at times when, as if conscious that the world views the conduct of such an eye with suspicion, it was capable of a steady, unflinching gaze, the defiance of a bold, unscrupulous spirit. He seldom showed his symmetrical white teeth through the medium of a smile; he was too politic to do so with the snarl which was more natural to him. He never laughed heartily, partly because there was nothing generous in him, chiefly because it was in bad form. Dignity was a part of his stock in trade. He had one peculiarity which he seemed to be unconscious of, or which he was unable to control. By contraction of the muscles of the head he could draw his scalp down almost over his forehead. He did this while abstracted, or when in some way thrown suddenly out of his usual train of thought. Sometimes when angry this peculiar distortion took place. Combined with a flashing eye, bloodless, compressed lips, and a nose which seemed enduring painful tension, it gave his expression something really demoniac.

Roker was a man with whom people instinctively avoid jesting. He was an affable, polished gentleman, who fulfilled with punctilious correctness the routine duties of society, and who was at all times scrupulously polite. His dress displayed none of the absurd fopperies of Snicker's make up. On his immaculate shirt front sparkled a diamond pin, which was the sole article pertaining to his person that was worn distinctly as an ornament.

From the remark "one more experience" it must not be inferred that Frederick Snicker admitted any genuine regrets over his lost love, or that the lady was conscious of any. To experience anything approaching a real human feeling or sentiment would have been in the estimation of this sappy pair an exhibition of very bad taste. The flabby intellect which animated their mushy brains was incapable of such experiences. It might have been overwhelmed by some great dis-

aster just as the thieving little chipmunk is crushed by the dead fall. But it could no more realize that disaster or rise above it than could the flattened chipmunk crawl from beneath the great cruel stone.

As the conversation reached this point, Silas Ingledee sauntered into the room and joined Roker and Snicker. The young man had not lived so rapidly lately. He had not been out later than four o'clock in the morning for a whole week, and had been getting an extra hour's sleep during the day. He was carefully dressed, as usual, and in consequence of such ascetic abstinence from pleasure, really looked a handsome young man. His fine face was a great contrast to that of either Snicker or Roker. Nature had done so much for him and so little for Snicker, and yet both their grists were practically being ground in the same hopper, though Silas's fine grain went through rapidly, while Snicker's husky kernels danced on top from sheer lightness. Roker prudently preferred to feed the hopper.

"Ah, how are you, Roker?" said Silas.

"Very well, thank you. How are you?"

"Tip top! How's the office? Governor got any new deals on the string? Haven't seen him for some time."

"The office runs as usual, and your father's operations are even heavier than usual."

"He wants to rope me into that margin and ticker business. But I can find more congenial amusement than watching rows of figures on a paper tape, that runs like clock work and never lets up. Hello, Snicker," said he, as he turned to that young gentleman, who, from appearances, was industriously trying to swallow the head of his cane. "How are you?"

"Well, I cawn't weally say. A twifle misewable I think on the whole."

"Not in love again? Who is the charmer?"

"That's abwupt, Ingledee," said Snicker, with a feeble attempt at pretended offense. *Abwupt* was the strongest piece of armor, offensive and defensive, in his verbal arsenal. He often objected to the manner of a disagreeable statement more than to the matter. It must not be abwupt, for to be abwupt was not in good form.

"Pshaw! now don't try to deny it; you know you are a lady-killer."

As the chief amusement of Fred Snicker was to fall in

love, or attempt it, he admitted the soft impeachment by a flabby smile of acknowledgement.

"If you'd indulge a trifle more excitement you wouldn't feel so miserable. Don't you think so? Say an elopement, or a breach of promise. Wouldn't that be about the thing, Roker?"

Roker added, "Or punch some rival's head now and then," in a tone which seemed to imply that Snicker was capable of committing a blood-curdling murder by way of amusement. Snicker felt the compliment implied in the admission that he was a man of the world. But one of the chief resources among his paltry stock of ideas was that of objecting to imaginary affronts which he conjured up for the sake of objection, well knowing no offense was meant. He acted as if he should have been flattered had they suggested a highway robbery, but as it was only a fisticuff he considered it common and "abwupt," and so expressed himself.

"Gentlemen, I consider that abwupt. You know there are things that may be too abwupt to the feelings of a gentleman." This statement was so obvious there was no gainsaying it. Silas, thinking perhaps he had for once really probed a tender spot, hastily explained:

"Beg pardon, Snicker. I meant no offence. But really, a little wholesome activity would set you all right. Don't you think so, Roker?"

"Undoubtedly."

"I make no suggestions, but think it over."

Had he been in the far West, Silas would doubtless have suggested the exciting pastime poetically known as "painting the town red." As this species of advanced art, as applied to the evolution of amusement is unknown in New York, or known by a different name, Ingledee could only summarize by repeating "Think it over."

"I will, Ingledee," replied Snicker, who was now all good humor and no longer felt miserable. He felt that he was considered a fast young man by the fastest young men in the town. Altogether he was a daring, reckless, possibly dangerous young blade. He suddenly remembered that he had an appointment, and with an adieu which approached the *abwupt*, he ambled out, twirling his absurd little cane. His companions bowed a pleasant good evening and then forgot Snicker as utterly as if he had never existed.

After some desultory conversation Silas remarked, with his eyes fixed on Roker's right hand:

"By the way, Roker, I have often noticed a faint line across the backs of your fingers; excuse my curiosity, but is that a scar?"

"There is a rather vivid incident of my boyhood connected with that scar, Ingledee."

"Would you mind telling it? I am curious now."

"I have no objections," replied Roker. Silas settled himself in his chair to listen.

"You know, Mr. Silas, that my parents were poor. Sometimes it was hard work and close saving to make both ends meet. Often we boys had to stay out of school for months to work. One term when I was about ten years old I wanted to join a class in grammar just starting in our school, and I was determined to join it. I was some years younger than most of the members, but I was determined to keep up with certain boys if I had to study half the night to do it. If I missed that class I should be thrown back possibly two years, and might lose my chance altogether of studying that subject in school.

"I teased my mother for the book, but she refused to get it because she could not afford the expense. But I gave them no peace at home; determined to carry my point. Finally mother told me that if father and I, my brother being away from home, would abstain from eating eggs till I saved the fifty cents necessary I might buy the book. It required four dozen, and we had few hens; I set about getting them. I watched the hens with the eye of a hawk, and whenever one cackled I was on hand to get the egg.

"One day I heard an old hen cackling loud up over an oats-bin in the little barn. I placed a peck measure on top of a barrel, climbed up and found to my delight a new nest with several eggs. I put them in my old slouch, wool hat, and gathered it together like a bag. I started to climb down again, but the bin was made by standing the boards on end instead of running them cross-wise. At the top was a wedge-shaped crack, and as I stepped on the peck measure it tilted. I lost my footing and my hand stuck in that crack. I dropped with my whole weight on those fingers, and there I hung. I thought every second they would pull off, but they didn't."

"A pretty fix, wasn't it? Then you dropped the eggs and yelled?"

"I screamed at the top of my voice for help, but I held

on to the eggs with the left hand, though I might have clung to a projecting piece of scantling with it."

"How did you get down?"

"I hung there, it may have been three minutes, though I thought it an hour, till a neighbor, working in his garden across the alley, heard my screams for help and took me down."

"And the eggs?"

"As soon as I saw they were safe, I fainted with the pain. That is all there is to that scar."

"I hardly think I could do that to save a few cents."

"Perhaps not. It is not necessary for you to do it."

"Say, Roker, isn't the Governor a little bit queer lately?"

Roker, as Mr. Ingledee's private secretary, having risen little by little to the position of confidential adviser, had much better opportunities than the son for learning the state of his employer's mind on subjects usually more or less confidential. He could have guessed, with tolerable assurance, whether the Governor was "queer" or not. But Roker was not given to guessing in cases like the present.

"What do you mean, Mr. Silas?" He knew perfectly well what Mr. Silas meant. He was an open well when it rained, but only a dry one, when others wanted water. His rule of life might be summed up briefly: Learn all you can of other people's plans; disclose none of your own.

"He wants me to enter the office."

"Oh, he mentioned that to me. I see nothing queer in that."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him you were young, and there was plenty of time yet."

"Thank you for that, Roker. I really can't give up life yet." The young man spoke in an earnest almost anxious manner as if he felt that giving up idle dissipation and going to work were equivalent to quitting life altogether.

"No thanks are necessary. I spoke from honest conviction."

"Did father speak of anything further than the office?"

"I hardly understand you." As Mr. Ingledee had not spoken further, Roker hoped to learn from the son what the father did not choose to disclose.

"In fact, he thinks I'm going a little too fast."

"Young men are expected to see life."

"But father declines to look at it that way. Would you mind toning the thing down a little to him if he speaks to you about it? He would sit on me if he knew half."

"I shall be happy to do anything in that direction that I can, but then," he added deprecatingly, "you know I'm only an employe and a stranger."

"Father has every confidence in you. What you say will go a long way with him."

"Ah, indeed! All right, Mr. Silas, you may rely on me."

"Thank you. Now will you go and take some wine?"

"No, thanks. You know I seldom indulge."

"What do you say to a glass of absinthe? It is a very nice drink, Roker."

"Thank you; its effects are rather lasting for office work. You have plenty of time for such things."

"Really, Roker, what sort of a man are you? You never seem to care for anything."

"Oh, I have my quiet tastes."

"Silas suddenly rose to take his departure. "I am expected at Chrysolite's ball," he remarked, "and must be going."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

"Poor fool!" mused Roker, as his companion disappeared. "Absinthe, wine, dancing, loss of sleep, carousals. A few years will end him." Pulling a choice Havana from his cigar-case, he proceeded to indulge one of his "quiet tastes."

Members of the club came and went; still Horace Roker smoked on. No one disturbed him, for he was in a reverie, and his friends knew at such times it was very unprofitable work trying to engage him in conversation. In reply to greetings, he nodded mechanically and still puffed airy clouds of smoke that were as light as his own visions. In these floating clouds he constructed magnificent castles. He saw a princely residence, and a handsome dark-eyed woman presiding over it. He sailed the fastest yacht on the seas; he drove the fastest team on the island. He entertained in regal style persons whose incomes exceeded those of princes. He bought railroads, as he would have bought pine-apples for his table.

He smoked on while people came and went till the stream gradually subsided, and then ceased. His vision had taken more definite shape than ever before. It was so pleasing that

he indulged it longer than usual, as we often indulge some favorite pleasure on certain occasions to make amends for past denial.

After midnight Mr. Roker aroused himself and started home. He trod with a light step. The absorbing hope of his life which he had heretofore restrained with tight rein, lest it carry him away into the regions of a mere dreamer, now bid fair to be realized.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HONORABLE DAVE SAWDER.

Among the friends to whom Tom Norwell wished to introduce Arthur was Austin Hickley, a young lawyer rapidly rising into note. Tom and Hickley were intimate friends, though the latter was the senior of the former by several years. Hickley had come to New York a poor young man from a country town. He was thoroughly well read in law, and by means of family influence succeeded in entering the offices of a well-known law firm, though in a very humble capacity. His work at first was wholly clerical, and not very remunerative. Step by step he advanced, however, until he was admitted to a partnership. One of the senior partners died some years later, and the other resigned practice to accept a position on the bench. Thus Hickley at the age of thirty-five found himself in exclusive possession of a good business, and wielding no inconsiderable local influence.

One afternoon Arthur Wilson, Tom Norwell and Hickley sat conversing in the private office of the latter. It was late in the day, which was a very dark, disagreeable one, and no clients were liable to interrupt them. Wilson gradually turned the conversation toward the one subject of most interest to himself—his finding something to do. Mr. Norwell had vainly inquired among his former business acquaintances with a view to securing a situation for the son of his old friend. Good situations do not go begging amid the fierce competition of a great city, where there are usually fifty men seeking each really desirable position. In one place he could have obtained a situation at a fair salary had he been an ex-

perienced salesman, in another a book-keeper was wanted, but experience was required, and so on through the list. He could find plenty of places where the opportunity of handling heavy boxes was extended at the rate of six dollars, or thereabouts, per week. He began to realize that distance did really lend enchantment to cities. The fact was, that while possessing a good education in the common acceptation of the term, he knew how to do no one thing well. If he began here at all he must begin at the very bottom, which will do for a boy but not for a man.

Arthur Wilson was not easily discouraged, neither did he have the over confident hope born of inexperience and ignorance. He felt that something must soon be done, and his chances were poor. His board and lodging were provided for so long as he chose to remain with the Norwells. He had calculated that these were the chief, indeed, almost the entire expenses incident to city life. He learned there were a thousand and one ways of spending money which he had never suspected. Tom was generous and could afford it. Arthur was generous and could not afford it. He insisted on paying at least part of the time, hence their seeing the town, though they did nothing extravagant, had cost considerable money, and Arthur's slender stock was melting with a rapidity which gave him no little secret anxiety.

"I trust we may be able to do something for you," said Hickley.

"Your tone is not one of confidence," replied Arthur.

"To tell the truth, I am not confident. Everything here is full to overflowing."

"Yet you came here a poor boy and did well," interjected Tom. "Father came here a poor boy and did well. Have not hundreds of others done the same thing?"

"Yes, thousands, for that matter, but look at the thousands who are still struggling with abject, hopeless poverty, sinking instead of rising. Sinking, because the best days of their life are passing, and the day is coming when they can no longer earn the pittance they now get."

"Perhaps they do not save," suggested Wilson.

"Some do not, some can not. Boys, I'll tell you a little of my own experience in saving. Near the end of my first year in New York, when I felt that a new suit of clothes was a grim necessity in the near future, this was my bill of fare for several months: A cup of coffee and a roll at a cheap little cof-

fee-house, for breakfast, ten cents; a bowl of soup for dinner, ten cents; three oatmeal crackers and a handful of raisins in my own little room for supper, five cents; total, twenty-five cents per day." The two listeners stared at Hickley in silent amazement.

"Here a man must undergo a long and arduous course of hard, unremitting labor and pinching economy to arrive at a competence. When he has reached that enviable condition he suddenly realizes that a mere competence, as a rule, entitles its possessor to very little social consideration in a great city. Rather than such a state of affairs I should prefer to stay in the country. I'd eat boiled beef and cabbage, and be a person of some importance in the community."

"Hard work and economy," replied Wilson, "have done well in your case. I would willingly do the same to accomplish the same results."

"They did not do all. I know men who have worked harder and have nothing. A man may dig a ditch to the foot of fame's ladder, but he can not dig ditches and mount. Death removed one of my partners very opportunely for me. Political preferment removed the other. Such accidents seldom happen."

"Hang it, Hickley, what are you talking about? You wouldn't live on a farm and toil fifteen hours a day, sleep seven, eat one, read none, sing none, and visit twice a year on Sundays. Compared with such an existence the life of an oyster is really exciting."

"I admit there are numerous social and intellectual advantages to be found in the city, but at least a moderate amount of money is required to obtain access to them."

Tom laughed heartily. "Confound it, stop your croaking, Hickley. You'd give a mummy the blues. I'll never bring a friend here again for consolation. I might have known better than to go to a law shop for that article, where no fee pertained to the case. We'll get Wilson a fat job yet."

It was a trait of Tom Norwell's never to turn any one away with a bad story. He always chose the bright side of everything instinctively. Perhaps this was because he had never seen any dark side, and had doubts of its existence. From the confidence expressed in Tom's tone, the "fat job" might have been already under lock and key and the key in his pocket. Hickley was silent. There was no resisting the spon-

taniety of Norwell's nature, in spite of the fact that prudence plainly said he was too sanguine. They were interrupted by a knock at the door, on opening which, the office boy showed in the Honorable David Sawder.

The Honorable David Sawder, familiarly known simply as Dave Sawder, desired a private interview. He and Hickley at once retired to another room and carefully closed the connecting doors. What transpired there is of great importance, and the author must claim an author's privilege of understanding it all. The Honorable David Sawder was a politician of national reputation. He had for many years represented a New York district in Congress. He was a large, plethoric, well-fed man, nearly six feet in height. He had a blonde complexion and a heavy blonde mustache. His sensual mouth and coarse, meaty nose marred a face otherwise well proportioned, and indicating, as the accompaniment of an unusually well-developed head, the possession of no common powers, both physical and mental. His restless gray eye was as quick as the eye of an eagle, and read men at a glance. He had a large muscular hand and enormous feet, which he moved in walking, when not conscious of observation, with a peculiar pulling motion indescribably comical.

On public occasions, when conscious of that organ known as the public eye, to which unusual powers of vision are attributed with perhaps very small reason, Sawder's movements were more dignified and always incisive. His efforts to appear graceful were, however, in a measure futile, for his bearing and gestures indicated power rather than grace or beauty. He had that hearty, cordial manner which is so necessary a part of the politician's stock in trade. It made him very popular with the masses, combined as it was with the faculty equally necessary to his craft, of knowing at sight, which will prove the popular side of a question. He nurtured another acrobatic feat in a high degree of perfection, which was known as "flopping," if inadvertently he dropped on the wrong side. However, he nearly always found himself on the popular side at first. This power of discernment in him amounted almost to intuition.

Back of all his easy, matter-of-fact cordiality, which was made the most of, the keen student of human nature might have observed in the Honorable Dave something that was to be distrusted, or which, at least, would bear watching. The keen eye was a trifle too restless. It lacked the appearance of

honest, kindly candor which is one of the most beautiful emanations of that most expresive organ. His mouth had an animal, selfish appearance. It had so long fed on the public plums that it seemed to have acquired a chronic condition of watering for them. This impression was confirmed by an occasional movement of the watery-looking lips which very much resembled that vulgarly known as "licking the chops." The real cause of this peculiarity was a slight disease of the salivary glands induced by the habit of full feeding. He was well dressed in plain black, and wore on one of the fingers of his left hand a massive plain gold ring. He wore a heavy gold watch and chain. From the latter dangled a large charm with a seal.

The Honorable Dave began abruptly:

"What is the outlook in your ward, Hickley?"

"Good, I think. There is little doubt of our carrying it for the whole ticket by a handsome majority."

"What have you done?"

"Held several meetings and distributed a cord of documents more or less. We have organized the young men into a marching club, provided with uniforms and torches. They parade twice a week."

"All well enough in its way, but what *practical* work has been done?"

"Don't you call that practical?"

"Certainly, but there is something more necessary. You must see every doubtful voter and bring unanswerable arguments to bear on him."

"What if he persists in bolting after you have seen him?"

"Then he must be seen again by a reliable man."

"Mr. Sawder, the duties of my profession are very exacting."

"You are chairman of the district executive committee, and it is expected of you to see this work done. I do not mean that you shall make a personal canvass."

"I see little use in argument. Seeing a man once is as good as seeing him twice to my notion. Besides, I am not running for office."

"*I am*, Hickley, which amounts to the same thing. But you needn't waste time with men who are always doubtful. See them finally on election day. They have an eye to the convincing argument."

"I hardly understand your reference to the *convincing* argument, Sawder."

The Honorable Dave stared at Hickley for a moment with incredulous wonder. "Is it possible that you have dabbled in politics for years, and particularly in New York politics, and do not understand what is meant by *seeing* a man. You are a rising lawyer, too! Oh, I know better than that." And he laughed as if it were really a good joke.

"Know better than what?" asked Hickley, with a trifle of warmth. Then the truth began to dawn on him. "If you mean that we must stoop to *buying* votes I must inform you that I value my reputation too highly to descend to such depths of degradation."

"Now, don't be hasty, Hickley. Look at the matter in a sensible light. I don't ask you to peddle greenbacks personally. Find the men to do it. You have received many favors from our party indirectly."

"And have done a great deal for the party. But I do not care to become a professional politician. I have no ambition at all in that direction." He said this with covert sarcasm, which intimated that the professional politician was, to use a favorite rustic simile, rather small potatoes. The Honorable Dave Sawder discerned Hickley's attitude at a glance. But he was too politic to show anger. He reserved all his righteous indignation for the other side of the House in Congress. There his patriotism was forever on tap and effervesced in a perennial stream of brilliant, though at times somewhat windy oratory. He replied: "Hickley, you are a young man yet."

As Hickley had reached the years when youth is gone forever, and the time was rapidly approaching when he could no longer, except by gross and palpable flattery, be called a young man, he silently acquiesced in the sentiment. He had reached the beginning of that debatable period, when one is not claimed very heartily by the young folks, and is unwilling to surrender gracefully and take a position with the sober, middle-aged contingent of society. Hickley was willing to be a young man if it didn't cost too much, and Sawder knew it. At fifteen he would perhaps have been a young *man* at any cost. Everything, however, with which the Hon. Dave Sawder was connected, was pretty sure to cost *somebody* something in the end. He continued: "Hickley, at your time of life many a man has ruined his prospects by entertaining fastidious notions. You can't afford it. Mr. Ophir has put a great deal of railroad business into the hands of your firm, and is doing the same for you. He put your sur-

viving partner on the bench, and left you at the head of a fine business."

This was a very frank admission on the part of Sawder, and one that he would not have made publicly. It is a comparative innovation for railroads to make judges of the higher courts. Their making United States Senators has ceased to attract attention, if it ever did. As to making Congressmen and members of State Legislatures, that is not worth the trouble. They can be bought ready-made much cheaper, like slop-shop clothing, especially when they are marketed in job lots. Hickley was silent, and the Honorable Dave continued: "Ophir is friendly toward you, and you know his influence is worth having. Besides, you must not forget past favors. Now Mr. Ophir particularly desires that Barkwell and myself should be re-elected to Congress, so that in case the new bill relating to the Continental and Pacific does not get through the coming session, there will be experienced men to take care of it in the future."

"Why, Barkwell belongs to the other party."

"That makes no difference. He is sound for the C. & P. R. R., and his opponent isn't. Ophir's motto is, 'Votes first, party afterward.'"

"I'm perfectly willing to work and make speeches, but I decline to handle any money."

"Oh, that's all right. Find men to do it. This requires fine work."

"So I perceive."

"There is another feature of the work that must not be neglected. The other party are straining every nerve, and intend to run in a lot of fraudulent voters. We must head them off wherever our side is in a good working majority."

"By working similar tactics?"

"Well, that's about it. The only weapon to fight the devil with is fire. The other party have been doing it for years. Now we will give them a dose of their own medicine."

"Mr. Sawder, I decline to be a party to such methods."

If all politicians made and rigidly adhered to a similar resolution, there would be inaugurated a millennium of political purity which only the most visionary theorist may hope to see. The greatest political crime possible in a republic,—worse, in fact, than open rebellion,—is that of corrupting the ballot. Yet here was a so-called statesman who counte-

nanced it because it was apparently the most effective way of combating a thoroughly unscrupulous opposition. Here was the further spectacle of a lawyer in good standing whose chief apparent objection to this great political crime was the very negative one that he did not wish to be known as countenancing such things. God forbid that this monster of political corruption should ever crawl from his slimy den in our great cities to fasten on the honest rural districts. When he does so unrebuked, the grandest experiment ever tried, of government by the people and for the people, will be recorded in the book of time as a failure. The weeping genius of liberty, with heavy heart and eye that fondly dwells on history's brightest page, will sadly close forever the record of the last republic, and man's greatest opportunity is lost till the cycles of time shall change the very face of civilization itself.

"You are not expected to take any part in that portion of the work. It might be well for you to know something about it, so that you will thoroughly understand the bearings of the canvass. Dyke, Miller and Williams will be the active workers." It may be added that the three worthies referred to were well known as unsavory pot-house politicians, who derived their chief support from the tolerably constant supply of dirty political work,—national, state, county or municipal. One of them was brother to an alderman, which was in itself a great political capital. Another was cousin to a city official of high position, and a third possessed in a marked degree the indispensable faculty of enthusing the "boys."

Hickley quietly remarked: "I've heard of those gentlemen. I understand their methods are very effective."

"Very! We are lucky in winning them to our side. Some years ago they were against us, you know." The Hon. Dave's very narrow majority at the time alluded to attested the efficacy of their methods.

"By the way, let's go down and see Ophir. There are some matters of finance connected with the campaign fund which had better be attended to." Hickley, seeing further demur not only useless but impolitic, bade his friends good-day, and started with Sawder to Ophir's office. It was late, and that great man was just putting on his coat preparatory to going home to dinner.

"How are you, Sawder? Glad to see you. Everything going favorably?"

"Yes, I feel very confident."

"How are you, Mr. Hickley? I've not had the pleasure of seeing you lately."

"I'm quite well, thank you. Hope you are the same."

"We came down to mention one or two points connected with the canvass."

"I'm at your service. Have seats, gentlemen."

"I've been talking with Mr. Hickley here," continued the Hon. Dave, "and we agree that the campaign must be an aggressive one."

"Take them by surprise. That's the way to do it," replied Ophir.

"I have talked with Hickley, and we have about agreed on what is to be done." At this juncture Sawder managed to catch Ophir's eye, while the lawyer happened to look toward the model of the yacht above the desk.

"You and Hickley never do anything by halves. I think the party can always rely on you. You are both on the road to preferment yourselves, you know, and the speed you make depends chiefly on your own exertions. You can't afford to be lukewarm."

"Certainly not," replied Hickley.

That gentleman now felt decidedly uncomfortable. He was a man of intelligence and refinement. Heretofore he had succeeded in preserving his honor. Now in the brief space of an hour a great crisis had come upon him. He felt that he was completely in the power of these two men, even though he were a rising and highly successful lawyer. There was no denying that he was largely indebted to Ophir for his success. To hold back now would seem base ingratitude,—furthermore, it would be ruin. Somebody else would do the work and reap the reward if he refused. The things demanded were wrong and dishonorable, but they were an evil of the times not of his making. If a great free people were willing to have their rights trampled under foot, they did not deserve to be free. Besides, he conscientiously believed the party they were fighting was much worse than his own. He would do the work. If it soiled his hands a little, he would profit by it sufficiently to be able to buy gloves for the rest of his life. Sawder knew perfectly well that Hickley would not dare to refuse in Ophir's presence to do this degrading work. He had no object in calling upon the railway magnate but to rivet more firmly the fetters on the law-

yer's conscience. However, he remarked, as a pretense of business:

"All these things cost something, Mr. Ophir."

"To be sure, Mr. Sawder. I have to-day handed my check for fifty thousand dollars to the executive committee. I'll duplicate that sum, if necessary."

"We'll make it warm for them."

With this remark the conference adjourned. But the Hon. Dave was not yet done with Hickley. While he had him in training he might as well pilot him to Sandy Miller's saloon, in Jamaica street, and introduce him to that shining light in local politics. He felt sure of Hickley, but it was just as well to get him so thoroughly into the work that there could be no backing out. He steered Hickley, as if by chance, into the street where this famous resort was situated, and on passing the door suddenly remembered that he wished to see a man inside. That man was the celebrated Sandy Miller himself, to whom Hickley was duly introduced.

Sandy Miller was a raw-boned, heavy man, of powerful physique. He had the jaw of a bulldog, and a short, turned-up nose, whose uncouth shape and proportions could only remind one of a hippopotamus in miniature. He had a powerful arm, with muscles like iron. On the latter useful member his bread had more than once depended, in a sense different from the scriptural reference to sweat of the face. He had once been a professor of the manly art offensive and defensive. On different occasions he had put his skill to very practical account by entering the ring, where, after knocking out several representatives of high art in this line, he was himself beautifully knocked out by another "Professor," whose jaw was a trifle squarer, chest a little deeper, and fist a little more nearly approaching the proportions of the hammer of a pile driver. The police had been unusually vigilant on this last occasion. In consequence, Sandy not only got a good drubbing, but six months in the Tombs as well. Here he acquired a taste for public life.

On his release he combined the business of liquor selling with that of practical politics. In the latter capacity he "fixed" primaries, organized repeaters, and engaged in ballot-box stuffing when more specious methods failed. He made money, built a fine house, and once actually had an eye on good society. But he found the proprieties which hedge the social shrine much more difficult to be thrust aside than

the defences of the ballot box. On the present occasion Sandy's very red hair was carefully combed and pasted until it was as smooth as the nose of a fish. His glowing, beefy face shone like the setting sun of Indian summer. A large diamond sparkled on his shirt front. He was happy, for an election was at hand, which meant a thriving business in the sale of drink, to say nothing of the more *practical* part of the canvass.

Hickley was introduced, and the trio adjourned to a back room, the Hon. Dave briefly remarking something to a bartender as they passed. This remark apparently resulted in hot whisky punches, for these popular beverages appeared on the table in a very brief space of time. Talking politics became a comparatively cheerful occupation under the stimulating influences of the last named auxiliaries. Sawder remarked:

"Hickley is chairman of your ward committee, as you know, Mr. Miller."

Sandy made a cordial but very angular bow in acknowledgement of Hickley's acquaintance and position, saying he was "happy to know Mr. Hickley." Hickley murmured something in reply about having frequently heard of Mr. Miller. The latter end of his remark was rather indistinct, but Miller charitably construed it to mean something like "The pleasure is mutual, sir," and bowed again.

Hickley was anything but happy. He felt that he had been duped, and forced into a disreputable situation. He disliked these men and loathed their methods. He had no particular objection to an occasional social glass, but here he sat in a dram-shop, engaged in what looked very like guzzling liquor for the love of it. Sawder was celebrated for his ability to coax, wheedle, or whip kickers into the party traces. Hickley's secret indignation was at white heat. He imagined that Sawder was gloating quietly over his victory, whereas the latter really indulged no such sentiment toward him. Hickley felt very much like the man who is persuaded at the point of a shot gun. There is this advantage, however, in favor of the man who is compelled against his will by threats of personal violence. When the danger is removed he may then conscientiously forswear his promises. The hen compelled to set, will sit standing. But Hickley had no such refuge. The influences which threatened now to take away his business and blight his prospects would exist as

a clog to his freedom in the future. Quick as a flash he realized all this, and felt that sulking was the worst possible course. He would assume the good humor his companions felt. Sandy's tongue was loosened a little under the influences of a whisky punch. He remarked with a coarse laugh:

"Sawder, how did you like the primaries this year?"

"They were well managed."

"We voted nearly one hundred men from Mrs. Whiff's boarding house," Sandy added, laughing again heartily.

"Ah! Indeed?"

"Now, would you like to know how many men really board there?"

Sawder looked a little uncomfortable, as if statistics on such matters were irrelevant. This was a matter best not to be mentioned, even to the man who profited most by it. Sandy, not noticing Sawder's uneasiness, added, "Just three men and two boys."

The election referred to was a *primary*. In these primaries are selected the delegates who nominate candidates for all important offices. Thus do the American people imagine that they select their own candidates, and loyal to their party, they conclude the farce by voting for men whom they really had no more voice in selecting than did the people of Canada. In justice to Sawder it must be said that he had time and again been elected fairly. Lately, however, there was dissension among his own followers, and hints as to spots on his record. There was increasing confidence on the part of the opposition. He had tasted the sweets of office and influence too long to resign them without a desperate struggle, and next thing to being elected fairly was to be elected at all. Sandy Miller was a convert from the opposition, where he had frequently worked the *practical* part of the machine. He brought these tactics into the camp of his friends in a high state of perfection. The "boys" still followed him. Sandy continued, confidentially, "I've two men who are daisies, I tell you. I introduced you to them, you know, Barney Dyke and Pewter Williams."

"I remember them," said Sawder. The Pewter Williams referred to had been suspected by the police of nearly every crime in the calendar, but had never been detected in anything more serious than participating in a drunken row in which he nearly killed a man. Barney Dyke was a loafer without vis-

ible means of support, except the earnings of a hard-working wife. He drank heavily, gambled in a small way when he had any money, which was not often, and was generally disreputable. He had never been detected in anything worse than beating the unfortunate woman who unaccountably married such a brute. For this pastime he got fifty days and a chance to get sober.

"Dyke will look after the registering. There's one lodging-house where we've twenty men from Jersey already."

"Particulars are unnecessary," said Sawder uneasily. He feared that such degrading revalations might thoroughly disgust Hickley, who, if he determined on bolting the machine, could cause a very disagreeable party rumpus. He wished the subject changed. To his mind, buying legal votes for spot cash was a much safer and more genteel method than colonizing ruffians.

"I was only explainin', so that you would know as things was goin' on all right. Williams will look after the challengers."

The challenging department deserves a few words of explanation. Sawder's party had never worked it successfully. It had flourished under the opposition, led by a celebrated "Boss." The polls, as far as possible, were located in filthy alleys or inconvenient places. Around them on election day gathered a lot of the dirtiest, foul-smelling reprobates which the slums of a great city afford. The challenger stood by the polls and caused as much delay as possible by challenging indiscriminately and asking needless questions. The judges, notoriously incompetent, to say the least, greatly facilitated this operation by asking stupid questions of their own. As many of the disreputable "gang" as could well do so kept constantly in line and delayed the voting, so that many of the respectable element, who were obliged to work all day, could not get in their votes at night. As the shades of a dark November afternoon set in the mob virtually took possession of the narrow alley and "jostled" timid voters often, frightening them away entirely. A more determined voter was sometimes quietly knocked down and then arrested for creating a disturbance. To accomplish this, a subservient constabulary was necessary, and these could always be secured under cover of *law* by the dominant party. This plan by which Sawder's party now proposed to fight the enemy, could not be worked in the "silk stocking" precincts. Such

is the farce too often enacted in our great cities and called an election. Can men who use dishonest means to obtain office, be expected to be honest in office?

Sawder evidently thought the object of the interview had been accomplished. He rose, remarking: "When you need pecuniary stimulus, call on Mr. Hickley," shook Sandy's hand cordially, led the way from the room, and sauntered up street, arm in arm with Hickley.

CHAPTER VII.

VERY HIGH SOCIETY.

Fifth Avenue had for sometime been in a state of breathless suspense. Society in the habitat of the nabob was agitated from its profoundest depths (the word depth is used figuratively, for nothing there could be *low*) to its dizziest pinnacles. Coming events are said to cast their shadows before, but this great event instead of a shadow cast such a brilliant glare of light in advance of it that all similar illuminations cast only shadows in the pervading splendor. A great ball was about to be given by the Ingledees on a scale that would astonish the aristocratic "old families." The newspapers and society journals talked of the event daily by the column, and intimated that the upheaval about to take place would agitate the upper crust of society, as it was never stirred before. Everybody, that is everybody who "pretended to be anything," including some thousands out of a million people, was anxiously expecting tickets, and some were going wild at the thought that the Ingledees would have to draw the line somewhere, and might draw it before their names.

Elderly matrons who had witnessed a hundred similar events posed before plate mirrors anxiously, to see how such slight frayings and furrowings as time had made inevitable in their charms, could be most thoroughly concealed. As a good story lies half in the telling so a woman's beauty is half in the exhibit, a fact which these ladies of uncertain years had learned long ago. The young belles of one or two seasons' experience, and the timid things about to essay the dizzy society whirl for the first time, were in a state of excitement lit-

tle short of lunacy. They consulted, chattered, and planned their beautiful adornments to set off each personal charm, giving as much thought to the subject as does the jeweler who is intrusted with the setting of a rare gem. Young and old alike drove incessantly hither and thither in their fine carriages, stopping at fashionable emporiums where the ravishing loveliness of the costly fabrics for sale would have driven a fairy, who is supposed to have all these things at command, wild with jealousy. The capricious creatures talked unceasingly to each other and to their counselors, pirouetted, selected and rejected until a male spectator compelled to listen to all this chatter, and attempt to understand it, would have certainly gone distracted.

Meanwhile the *very* young male devotee of fashion was placed in no enviable situation. The cruel decrees of custom prevented him from expending his pent-up feelings on objects similar to the thousand and one incomprehensible and mysterious trifles of the female toilet. He could strut like a peacock before his glass and study killing attitudes, thus in anticipation ensnaring the heart of the unwary female whom he expected to circle gradually nearer his irresistible charms as the helpless little bird flutters to its doom under the spell of the serpent. He might also puzzle his somewhat easily-confused brains over the pattern of a waistcoat or the hair-breadth nicety with which a handkerchief might properly protrude from a side pocket.

Mr. Fred Snicker had one very dear source of solicitude which kept him alternating between feverish hope and chill despair. He gave a great deal of attention to the aggravatingly slow growth of his embyro mustache, a growth which seemed to be retarded rather than accelerated by the very liberal tillage bestowed upon it in the way of irrigation by tonics, microscopic prunings and homeopathic brushings. These anxious attentions were as absurd as an attempt to slaughter a flea with a Gatling gun,—plenty of murder but little victim. The elderly-male member of society was undisturbed by this abnormal commotion around him, except when the current of his thoughts was diverted by the perusal of an apparently interminable bill from the dressmaker or milliner.

The Ingledee residence for several days before the event was taken possession of by an army of decorators. As an example of the lavishness with which the embellishment was conducted, one large saloon was literally covered with

thousands of jacqueminot roses which cost fifty cents apiece. Then came the caterer's men who brought wagon loads of glass and dishes, and turned the house into a vast crockery emporium. Idlers hung around the place, watching these movements with a curiosity akin to that which would have been exhibited, had a murder been committed there.

On the eventful evening in question the Ingledee palace, if so it may be termed without offense to republican readers, was brilliantly lighted from basement to attic. A lofty awning of red-and-white striped silk stretched from the door to the street. The steps were covered with carpet fit for the boudoir of a queen. Servants in gorgeous livery were in attendance, and two fine-looking policemen in shining new uniforms, buttoned and gloved to statuesque proportions, stood silently on the sidewalk to prevent vulgar eyes from gazing too curiously on these sacred preparations, or vulgar feet from approaching too closely the holy ground consecrated to snobbery. In the street were the struggling mob and long lines of carriages. Beautiful pages in gorgeous liveries flitted here and there, assisting fine ladies who swept like duchesses through the broad entrance, with rustling trains of richest silks and satins.

Inside, the air was heavy with the perfume of flowers. There were flowers everywhere,—in vases, in garlands over the doorways, in festoons from the ceilings, and on entering the drawing rooms and ball room, every guest was presented with a dainty bouquet of exotics. These beautiful trifles cost Mr. Ingledee several dollars each, as afterward duly appeared in the papers. They were comparatively modest display lines in this stupendous advertisement.

The "charming young hostess," Miss Chetta Ingledee, was "assisted" by her very dear friend, Miss Harrie Snicker, daughter of Amaziah Snicker, who had once scooped a million out of sugar. Miss Ingledee's exquisite dress was of the richest white satin trimmed with seed pearls. She wore no jewelry beyond a small gold locket which had been her mother's, and a pair of link gold bracelets, set with a single pendent diamond. She wore flowers on her bosom and in her dark hair. Her dress became her well, and she had the bearing of a queen. Miss Harrie Snicker was dressed in cream satin trimmed in yellow lace. Her train was of the most ample and unmanageable proportions. The general effect of this dress placed on such inadequate femininity was

similar to what might be expected if a blanket were attached to a boy's kite as a tail. Harrie Snicker, though perhaps a trifle above medium height, was utterly devoid of that commanding presence so necessary to the finely dressed lady. Harrie had the same insignificant, retreating chin of her brother, though less exaggerated. She had the same little, insignificant, turn-up nose, the same vacuous expression of countenance, though any one seeing Fred Snicker would have declared that nature could not duplicate his visage.

But nature, with all her infinite resources and that variety which is a constant miracle, still works after a definite plan by definite forms. The apparently impossible differences which may exist in so small a compass as the human countenance, and which render millions of faces distinguishable at a glance, is to me as great a mystery as life itself. Yet Nature has never made anything which she is not liable to reproduce almost to a line in some totally unexpected way.

In Miss Snicker's own opinion she was the peer of the beautiful hostess. The noisy cat bird with its jerky tail may be the peer of the stately swan in some respects, but certainly not in grace or dignity. Harrie had pretty white shoulders, which were displayed so as to make the most of them. Diamonds sparkled in her yellow hair, and a pearl necklace encircled her neck. On her arms were bracelets of exquisite workmanship.

Miss Bullion was radiant in white tulle embroidered with gold. On her person was one hundred thousand dollars' worth of diamonds. Miss Cypher wore white lace over white silk. Mrs. Van Brucker wore yellow silk and black Brussels lace. Numerous other ladies wore equally expensive and beautiful dresses, but space will not admit mention of all the guests and their costumes did the patience of the reader allow it. Doubtless the female reader has already lost all patience with the bungling efforts of a masculine pen to do justice to the utter loveliness of a five thousand dollar dress.

Among the guests were Mrs. Chrysolite, Mrs. Ophir, Miss Bullion, Miss De Furrier, Mrs. St. Sapodilla and others. Mr. Snicker was there to perform his customary exploit in sugar. Mr. Van der Bleeker, a young society lion who labored unceasingly to spend the interest on his interest, was there. He had lately immortalized himself by following a well-known actress all over the country in the role of Romeo to her Juliet after the play. Literature was represented by

several journalists of leviathan proportions, and the ubiquitous reporter who wrote up the ladies' dresses, describing the saloons as a "blaze of beauty and fashion." Politics was represented in the person of the Hon. David Sawder of national reputation, to say nothing of several lesser public functionaries.

Among those who must be classed as *miscellaneous*, for want of a more distinctive qualifying term, was Mr. Wyndleigh Garmand, a tall, handsome, florid Englishman, with the regulation mutton-chop side whiskers and eye-glasses. Garmand was remotely and somewhat dubiously connected with the aristocracy; but the feature pertaining to him which is of most interest in this story is the fact that he was very wealthy. His father had amassed a vast fortune in trade, and then opportunely died at the proper moment, leaving it all to his son. This considerate conduct on the part of the old gentleman may be adduced as a worthy example to those obstinate parents who persist in living long after they cease to be useful. Garmand was a thoroughly fresh Englishman, in the widest acceptation of that much abused adjective. He had come to America to learn our "rough ways," and had begun at Fifth Avenue because it happened to be the first place he struck.

Mr. Garmand had letters to the Norwells and others in good society, hence had no difficulty in entering the best circles at once. He had to some extent made a confidant of Tom Norwell, whose genial manner soon thawed English reserve so far as that very refractory article can be liquified. This was Garmand's first appearance in republican society. He was in some considerable doubt as to what was expected of him in the way of dress in the wilds of a new country. From what he had seen he thought this country was not half so wild as he had supposed. He had always heard that the Americans were a set of uncouth, disagreeable savages, with possibly a few rare exceptions, and he believed it. Unfortunately two or three specimens of the traveling Yankee whom he had accidentally known in London confirmed this view by their disgusting airs and reckless display of speedily-acquired wealth.

Garmand's father being only in trade and a man of little culture, the family had never been admitted into the very best society at home, and he was totally ignorant of what was expected of him here. He consulted Tom Norwell as to

what was demanded of him on this occasion. Had Tom advised him to go to the Ingledee ball in corduroy trousers, top boots and a flannel blouse, he should certainly have considered the matter. But no amount of coaching could conceal his ignorance, not only of New York society but of American geography and history in general. He had read only a little English history and the small amount of general history incident to it. That was all his father thought it worth the while of an Englishman to know. The son had come to learn our *rough ways*, and was of an inquiring turn of mind in consequence.

During the course of the evening Garmand was introduced to Arthur Wilson, and a conversation sprang up between them.

"Have you ever visited this country before, Mr. Garmand?" Garmand's language was very good. His speech was altogether too well calked to leak aspirates promiscuously after the harrowing manner of his unlettered countryman. Still he had the indescribable, affected drawl of the cockney who broadens his lazy vowels and obscures his r's. It cannot be placed on paper, but must be heard to be appreciated. The verb "cawn't" gives a morsel which will in some measure illustrate the kind of sound but not the prolongation of it.

"No; never had the opportunity before. I came over on a tour of some duration to study mankind in his more untrammeled aspects." He thought this a very delicate way of putting the case. He thought untrammeled aspects a reasonable concession to Yankee feelings, when in reality he meant he had come over to dissect a live Yankee and see what the animal was made of.

"I have no doubt you will find the untrammeled aspects you speak of very interesting."

"Ah, indeed? Yes, I dehsay! Never gave it any study whatever, you know, ah, but now I mean to make amends and take a very careful review of your social and political habits, and particularly the staatus of the lower closses." He said this, with an air which implied that America was a great natural curiosity to be looked upon as such, turned over, eyeglassed and dissected merely as the means of gratifying curiosity rather than from any real benefits to be derived from the examination. It was a case similar to that of the naturalist who expends much time and patience, studying the habits of ants to learn whether they really possess slaves, or

the domestic privacy of robins to ascertain whether they are addicted to polygamy. Both are subjects of some interest, but of small practical moment. Garmand added:

"Really, I cawn't see why the study of primitive manners and customs might not be made chawmingly interesting." He thought he could take a morning stroll from Union Square and find an Arcadian region where the inhabitants were delightfully fresh and primitive.

"Mr. Garmand, I assure you such studies as you propose, will be very interesting and novel. Possibly you will go home and write a book about America?"

"Cawn't say now 'pon my soul. Hadn't thought of it really." He never noticed the very apparent irony of Wilson's interrogatory. In a nation which considers nothing impossible, and which has produced the grandest literature of all time, the writing of a book is a matter of course, and a mere trifle.

"Do you think that I shall find the Americans, that is to say the natives, very communicative on the subjects which I propose investigating?"

"There's no doubt of it. They will all be pleased to aid you. It would afford me great pleasure at any time you choose if you would command me."

"Oh, ah, thank you; you are very kind. I shall some day take advantage of your offer." About this stage of the interview Miss Ingledee happened to discover the whereabouts of this unique pair. She wished to get a little better acquainted with Mr. Wilson, because he was a friend of Tom Norwell. With apologies for the interruption she drew Wilson away, and piloted Garmand to her friend, Harrie Snicker, where we will leave them for the present. Chetta had been indefatigable in her effort to make the ball a success. Her father had prepared this great show at vast expense merely to convince the world that the family of a railway king asks no odds socially, financially, or otherwise, of any of the oldest families. He believed in advertising. Chetta, since the effort had been made, wished its success in a somewhat different sense, and lent her energies to accomplishing one purpose—the pleasing of her guests. She had a word for all her acquaintances, and it was Mr. Wilson's turn now.

"You are a friend of Mr. Norwell?"

"Yes, I am visiting the family. Our fathers were old friends."

"It must be very pleasant to recall old times and associations."

"I find it so, though I had previously seen but little of Tom Norwell. He is quite a society man, I infer."

"Oh, yes, indeed! He goes everywhere. Everybody knows Thomas Norwell."

In making this commonplace remark Chetta had unconsciously fallen into the set phrases of supererogation adopted by good society when speaking of itself. I use the term *good society* as a further illustration of this principle. By *everybody* Chetta meant merely high society, and not, as might be inferred from a literal construction, boot-blacks, porters, and hackmen, though there came a time when the ears of even those for a brief season rang with the name of Norwell, which was on every tongue.

"He seems very popular," said Wilson, "and he deserves to be, for he is an uncommonly good fellow." He was on the point of adding, "Don't you think so, Miss Ingledee?" when a sudden thought arrested his speech just in time. Such a question in a case where the young lady was known to be intimately acquainted with the young man, might pass beyond the proper bounds of conventional conversation. Her heart would have leaped at the question, though her lips would have framed a very indifferent reply. The mystery of a woman's love is like perpetual motion—never to be solved.

"How do you like the city, Mr. Wilson?"

"I am delighted with it so far." Wilson was, indeed, fortunate in having a card to high society in the social standing of the Norwells. With their aid he had seen more in one month of fashionable doings than he could have seen in ten years or perhaps a lifetime unaided. She added: "I must introduce you to Miss De Furrier. She is an heiress of one of the wealthiest families in the city. She leads the very cream of the cream in society." Miss De Furrier was a woman of ordinary beauty. There was nothing striking in her appearance, though, she was dressed with exquisite taste. Her manners, which were frank and winning, exhibited thorough culture and genuine refinement. The introduction took place, and Chetta, who could devote little time to each guest, glided elsewhere.

Supper by the renowned caterer, Del Mundo, was constantly being served after eleven o'clock in the public dining-room of the house and a spacious annex built temporarily for

the occasion. The tables groaned (it is customary for tables to groan on such occasions) with the most costly luxuries and exquisite delicacies. There were eatables enough to feed an army, and the way in which they disappeared, showed a high degree of appreciation on the part of the public. Mr. Garmand had secured Miss Harrie Snicker as a partner to supper. Miss Snicker liked foreigners. Americans were so "common." She had introduced him to her father and her mother who was a tall, faded woman, chiefly noticeable for a scared look in her eyes, and a marked reticence which is popularly supposed to be an index of superior wisdom, but which frequently conceals only vacuity.

Mr. and Mrs. Snicker, with two or three couples more denominated old folks, had decided on an early supper. The little coterie found seats together at a table. Garmand thought this a favorable opportunity to learn something more about the United States. He had already begun to conclude that perhaps after all this country was considerable of a spot on the map of the world. Had he known that 3,000 miles of forest, mountain and prairie separated Calais, Maine, from San Diego, California; or that an equal space of fertile soil stretched from the graceful palms of Cape Sable to the giant pines of Puget Sound, his suspicion would have been confirmed. But fortunately for his self-satisfied patriotism he did not know it. Nor was Garmand by any means an ignoramus. He could locate Arbela and Marathon. He knew considerable about the Saxons, Danes and Normans, and still more about Wellington. He had come to America to learn, and expected to know all worth finding out in one short visit. He began on Miss Harrie Snicker. Before that young lady had been introduced to him five minutes she inadvertently called him "My Lord," and then blushingly apologized, though his disclaimer of the title showed no anger whatever.

"I've heard of the Hoosiers, Miss Snicker. Could you tell me something of the habits of that strange tribe, which, if I am correctly informed, is not yet extinct?"

"I don't pay much attention to those horrid common things. I believe they live out West, in Utah, or somewhere."

"Do they practice polygamy, then?"

"What a very strange question. How should I know?" she answered, with a pretty little pout, as if such a question

was hardly the thing to propound to a young lady. "I'll ask pa. Pa." This little syllable was spoken with an indescribable tone which indicated languor of thought, affectation and petulance. It was prolonged to several times its natural continuation as was befitting any reference, however short, to so important a personage in the Snicker economy.

"What is it, daughter?" inquired Snicker, with his mouth uncomfortably full of fried oysters.

"Tell Mr. Garmand about the Hoosiers."

"They live in Indiana and wear blue jeans," was the laconic reply, with another fried oyster immediately succeeding it.

"Do they have a plurality of wives?"

"A which?"

"Several wives, you know."

"No; can't hardly support one, I guess." Snicker answered in a rather loud, dogmatical tone, which indicated that when he expressed an opinion on any subject, that settled it.

"Ah, thank you." Garmand, as became a gallant, again addressed Miss Snicker. "It must be delightfully unique to live in a country where so many peoples and customs pass before your eye every day, you know. There are the Hoosiers, the Suckers, the Modocs, the Apaches, and so many other delightfully primitive tribes."

"What strange questions you ask, my Lord—I beg pardon—Mr. Garmand, I mean." After this little verbal naughtiness a blush struggled to make itself apparent beneath the powder on Miss Snicker's cheek, but failed. She went on:

"Those things are so very *common* that I never pay any attention to them."

Common was a word of daily, nay, hourly necessity in the Snicker vocabulary. The family looked with contempt on anything common, including the sixth sense of that name. Snicker, Senior, was "no common man, sir," as he frequently informed his acquaintances. For this reason Tom Norwell, Hickley, Silas Ingledee, and the young men generally, knew him confidentially as the "Old Commoner." Fred Snicker was the "Young Commoner," and Miss Harrie "The Little Commoner." In despair at such meager results, Garmand again directed his battery against the Old Commoner.

"This seems to be a country of considerable opportunity, Mr. Snicker. The common people, I observe, appear to have considerable to say here."

The common people he had seen in Fifth avenue did, indeed, seem to create some stir in the world.

"Grand opportunities, sir," came back, filtered through a spoonful of lobster salad.

"And open apparently to the peasantry."

"The which, sir?"

"The peasantry, the ah—the lower closses, you know."

"We've no peasantry here, Mr. Garmand. Our people are intelligent citizens, sir. With us they are simply the common people."

"And the opportunities, you know, are they open to all?"

"Well, in one sense yes, in one sense no." Snicker delivered this opinion slowly in sections, conscious of its vast importance. "There are great opportunities in America, but it takes no common man to *seize* them, sir." He unconsciously used the word seize with precision. If there were less seizing, doubtless there would be fewer *great* opportunities. "For instance," he continued, seriously impeded with chicken and jelly, "I scooped a million out of sugar."

"No! really, you know," ejaculated Garmand.

"Why didn't other people do it?" He did not reflect that if everybody had at the same time engaged in scooping sugar, the supply both of scoops and sugar might have been inadequate.

"I scarcely understand you," said Garmand, with a puzzled air.

"I said I scooped a million out of sugar. It's simple enough, but no common thing, I assure you."

"Oh, I see," said Garmand. "You were ah—once engaged in a sugar factory, eh?"

This was a very natural mistake, for Snicker's well-knit, portly frame, short neck and powerful hand indicated very superior powers when anything was to be scooped in a physical sense.

"Wrong, sir," said Snicker, with as much dignity as could be assumed under the depressing influences of a tart that persisted in dripping. "I bought low and sold high. When the war began I saw that sugar was goin' to go higher than Gilderoy's kite. I bought all there was in the market. Simple enough, wasn't it?"

"Chawmingly simple."

"Part of it was molasses, Pa."

"Oh, a trifle of a hundred thousand barrels," he replied,

dismissing the subject and the tart at the same time, with a wave of his hand. The party now left the table to escape the crush which was beginning to be felt in the vicinity of the edibles.

Mr. Ingledee did not play the host with the same geniality that marked the efforts of his daughter. He was studiously polite to all, but extra attentions on his part were scarcely becoming to his position unless bestowed on noted men, such as the Hon. Dave Sawder. It was quite enough for the rank and file to be invited to his house at all. If cordiality might seem lacking, there was much real dignity in his commanding figure and rigorously polite manner. He and the Hon. Dave Sawder were discussing politics. Ingledee had strong convictions that the only way to save the country was to keep the party which was now in power in possession of the government. There was much patriotic talk about the best interests of the country, some about the purity of the ballot box, and some on the currency question. The subject nearest both their hearts,—the attitude of the people and the government on the railroad question,—was not mentioned at all. That could be better discussed elsewhere.

A Mr. Brownell joined in the conversation. Brownell was a pompous man of most patrician appearance. He was very wealthy, and had no business. He and his family spent a great deal of time abroad, where the conditions appeared to be more favorable to the proper nurture of their transcendent pride. The care of this was quite enough for one man. It left him no time to fulfil the common duties of a citizen. He paid heavy taxes without a murmur because that was a matter of course, and cost nothing but money. He had no time to vote, and boasted that he had never participated in that plebeian performance but once when he was very young. Sawder was trying with indifferent success to convince him that it was his duty to vote. Brownell, as a compromise, said he would ask his private secretary to go to the polls,—thought *he* was a voter, was not quite sure. In Mr. Brownell's estimation it was scarcely worth while being an American citizen. The Roman, in that elder day, thought to be a Roman citizen was greater than a king. Mr. Fred Snicker, who had joined the group, said with considerable show of patriotism that he intended to cast his first vote "even if it did rain and prove disagweeable." Horace Roker announced a like determination. Snicker continued:

"It's a deucedly disagweeable duty though. I think there ought to be separate polls planted for the upper classes." He spoke of the polls as if he referred to a hop yard. "To stand and be challenged by one of those fellows is too bad. In fact, I consider it very abwupt to interrogate a gentleman that way."

The Ingledee ball was drawing to a end at three in the morning. It had been a most brilliant affair. Two thousand guests had been invited. There were beautiful women, gorgeous costumes and sparkling jewels of fabulous worth. The air was heavy with the perfume of choice flowers, and a thousand gas jets, softened by translucent screens, poured down a flood of lambent light. Rapturous strains of music rose and fell from time to time through the spacious ballroom and saloons. An unceasing hum of voices was everywhere. The constant movement of richly-dressed ladies from place to place continually shifted the scene like the magic changes of the kaleidoscope. Guests continued to arrive until so late an hour that the incoming tide scarcely cleared the way for those homeward bound. Blooming maiden and stately dame, callow youth and bearded manhood, all feasted their eyes on the prevailing splendor that shone in every detail of the gorgeous whole.

The ball was a success. It cost one hundred thousand dollars. It was an occasion never to be forgotten by those who had participated. It made nobody happier or better, but it stirred to its depths a whole ocean of pride, and there was a vast satisfaction in that. Some there were who thought all this time and money and effort well expended. To them it was a choice oblation to the god Style, who is exalted by the side of Mammon in the modern Pantheon. Miss Harrie Snicker was happy, for she had "assisted" at the greatest social event that had ever occurred in New York. Miss Ingledee was satisfied because she had succeeded in playing hostess on this, her first great occasion, without a jar in the movement of the great social panorama. Mr. Ingledee was satisfied that the thing was well done and would pay, and that was enough for him. In short, everybody seemed satisfied except those who were not invited.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WILL YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOR, SAID THE SPIDER TO THE FLY."

We find ourselves again in the palatial quarters of the Argosy Club. In the smoking room sat Mr. Norwell and Mr. Ingledee. Though never intimate, the two were on speaking terms. Lately Mr. Ingledee had seen fit to make the acquaintance a trifle closer and more cordial on his part. Mr. Norwell was a capitalist, and by some occult process Ingledee had learned that he was investing heavily in railway securities. Mr. Ingledee was largely interested in the Pacific Midland, a trunk line which, like its twin iniquity engineered by Ophir, was "a great public necessity." The only difference was that Ingledee's public necessity was located some thousand miles, more or less, farther from civilization than Ophir's. Consequently it was so much farther from the public eye, which organ so frequently fails to see as to give rise to the painful suspicion that it is stone blind.

The Midland got its necessary legislation through Congress by joining forces with the Continental & Pacific. Together these great corporations, through the lobby or "Third House," moved on the national Legislature. There was unlimited wining and dining and trading of influence, and the smiles of fair women of amiable dispositions, and making of presents, and "seeing" of Congressmen when all other means had failed. And so the railroads got what they asked, while a betrayed nation slept, only to awake covered with shame and disgraced by the men it had honored. In all history, even in the days of Roman infamy, there is no record of a greater grab. Of all the steals, rings and rascalities which grew out of the Civil War, and the demoralization consequent upon it, these were the most unscrupulous in conception, daring in execution, and colossal in proportions.

These companies built their roads out of the generous bounty of the government, which bounty was granted for the

sole purpose of building a national highway for the benefit of the people. Their land grant was in itself an empire, and they scrupled not to take possession of it before they had fulfilled the conditions laid down in their charter. The unfortunate settlers on such lands were driven from their homes in some instances by bands of hired murderers, employed by these soulless money kings of the New World.* American citizens were shot down in cold blood in order that these grasping despots might have a few more acres. Others lived in dread of ejectment under forms of law from homes rightfully theirs, and reclaimed from nature by their own hands. The machinery of the state and United States government is often invoked in assisting unrighteous acts of usurpation, while the people sit indifferent. When the horse has been stolen, and the thief beyond reach of the law (as these particular thieves already are), there will doubtless be a great hue and cry and much show of putting padlocks on the doors of the national stable, which needs a second Hercules for its cleansing.

Ingledee was endeavoring to convince Norwell that a little of the Pacific Midland stock would be a good thing to have. It had undoubtedly been a good thing for him and his three or four associate conspirators, who, beginning with a few thousand dollars, now controlled the whole of this great corporation, and wielded an influence which even the United States Government could not successfully oppose. The government subsidy in bonds, together with the company's own bonds, which took precedence by the Sawder act over the government lien, sufficed to build the road. The company had their capital stock of sixty millions and nearly twelve million acres of land *free*. This stock rose to nearly par in due time, because the commerce of several states was obliged to pass over the line, and its franchises were of immense value. Was ever such a princely gift bestowed anywhere outside the fairy realms of the Arabian Nights? Statesmen of the Dave Sawder type are very generous with public property. What did Uncle Sam get in return? The privilege of paying for a railroad without the right of owning or controlling it, and a second mortgage which he has found no means of collecting. What did the people of the *benefited* (?) region get? The blessed privilege of submitting to a

* NOTE 1.—The Mussel-Slough tragedy.

monopoly so grasping, aggressive and insatiable that the mission of the slave-driver is respectable compared with it. It may also be added, if anything is necessary to round out the fullness of such a stupendous iniquity, that the officers of the Midland Company, in addition to all that has been enumerated, made vast sums out of the construction of the road itself. They organized a "Financial Credit and Supply Company," which undertook to build the road. Precisely as Oakesworth's Construction Credit Company, of notorious reputation, built the Continental and Pacific. Ingledee and his partners let to the Financial Credit and Supply Company, which was themselves, construction contracts, for which enormous profits accrued to themselves at the expense of the railroad company, whose officers they were. Was there ever a more effective device for making money? But with this the public is, or should be familiar.*

Horace Roker dropped in presently, and the conversation turned on the stock market in general. Several anecdotes of the "street" were told, and Ingledee gradually veered round to the subject of Norwell's investments again.

"Norwell, you can't possibly find anything equal to it. Think of stock selling below par which will soon pay fifteen per cent. dividends. It paid ten last year, so you see we are improving." He added, confidentially, "We *could* run it to twenty-five if we chose." Or, he might have added, would if they dared.

"Really, Mr. Ingledee, your stock is unquestionably a good thing, but the fact is I have agreed to take a block of Ophir's. He is an old friend of mine, and I feel like helping him first."

At the mention of the word friend an observer might have noticed a smile curl the thin lips of Roker. But it passed instantly, and the firm lines of his mouth again indicated nothing but their usual inflexible gentility.

Ingledee, who had a very persistent cast of mind in matters of urgent moment, replied, "Yes, that is all well enough. I don't care, of course, to interfere with Ophir's transactions, but you know, Norwell, that it is not best to carry all your eggs in one basket. The rain that ruins your hay makes your corn, don't you see. Roker, what do you think of Midland Pacific?"

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*See Note 2, especially the *summary*.

"It is gilt-edged security beyond question."

"I do not doubt it, gentlemen. I will consider the matter, but for the present I have all the railroad securities I care to carry." Mr. Norwell rose and prepared to take his departure.

"Consider the matter, Norwell, and drop in."

"I think I can scarcely promise that, Mr. Ingledee."

Mr. Norwell took his leave and only Roker and Ingledee happened to remain in the room. Roker was secretly pleased to have so good an opportunity to improve the acquaintance of his employer. It may be supposed that ten years of almost daily intercourse had already made these two men well acquainted. But such was not the case. We may meet people every day for years; we may eat with them, work with them, and imagine we know them as well as our Bibles—possibly much better. We pronounce such a person a good fellow if we like him, or a bore if we dislike him. Usually we do not know him to be either, in reality. A sudden crisis comes in our acquaintance. A pressing need of service on his part or ours proves his nobility of soul to be like fine gold or his selfishness to be deserving only of contempt. Perhaps a mere trifle leads to this startling revelation, and we learn in ten minutes what we failed to see in ten years.

Horace Roker had been studying his employer with a purpose, and knew him much better than Ingledee suspected. He felt that the time had come for making some cautious approaches toward the one great object he had in view. He already had the confidence of the son, and felt that it was within the scope of probability to hold the same relation toward the father. As to the daughter, had she not always been gracious? In that quarter he would trust his passable looks, good manners and honeyed words. He argued that any woman who is heart free will love any man of decent standing and good prospects, provided he persistently leads her to believe that he loves her. But theories are useless in love. Ingledee spoke first, unconsciously paving the way to his confidential clerk's purpose.

"Roker, I should like to get Norwell into M. P. He is one of the solid men of the city. He would influence a great many more who are rather conservative respecting such investments."

"He would be of great value, but I hardly think you'll get him."

"Why?"

"He is an old personal friend of Ophir's."

"Old personal friend. Ah, indeed?" The tone of this remark might indicate that Mr. Ingledee appreciated the advantage which old personal friendship may offer when we wish to make use of it for our own selfish purposes.

"I shall not withdraw my proposition on that account. Ophir would be none too particular in handling my personal friends."

"I merely wished to say that I thought it impossible to get him into the enterprise."

"I understand your meaning."

"The son, Tom Norwell, would turn the whole fortune into Wall street in a month if he had it."

"Think so? Do you know him well?"

Roker had made this very commonplace remark with a design not apparent on the surface. Ostensibly it was a piece of information pertaining to business. It was a pointer which might be useful when lambs were to be shorn in the street.

"He is an excellent young man according to report, but not very decided in anything, I believe," added Roker.

"Possibly; I can't say."

"I have heard him express an intention to go into the street some time."

"Most young men probably try it once in their lives." The pump was not drawing at all. A deeper level must be reached before any information could be extracted. The conversation at once took a new turn.

"Your ball was a great success, Mr. Ingledee."

"Do you think so?" asked the latter, well pleased by the compliment. "Such things should always be done well."

"And yours was admirably managed. Miss Ingledee bore herself with all the grace and charm supposed to belong only to long experience."

"I believe she acquitted herself quite satisfactorily." In truth, Mr. Ingledee was secretly pleased with Chetta. He did not before realize that a girl could be of much use. Now he had different ideas on the subject.

"Life presents so many different aspects, that the art of true living is in itself a great study, and I take it that few people really attain perfection in it, if indeed perfection be ever more than a relative term. For instance, some people grub continually and never enjoy. Others spend their entire

time in a vain pursuit of pleasure, and never experience the sweet satisfaction to be derived from a bit of real work which accomplishes a useful purpose. Neither class have learned the true secret of happiness."

"I agree with you there, Roker, entirely."

"The social and business phases of life," said Roker, "should have a healthful influence upon each other. They do so in well-ordered lives. That work which we do easiest is always our very best, and so a healthy nature takes most pleasure in those amusements which are not frivolous. Thus social influences give business a healthful stimulus. If you will excuse a comparison which may seem at first sight sordid, I have no doubt your splendid reception will in some way send the impulses of its waves sooner or later into business, I may venture to guess into Wall Street."

"I've no doubt of it," replied Ingledee, who had been so busy with Roker's piece of logic that he did not at once realize its legitimate conclusion, which formulated exactly his own view of the subject, namely, that his grand reception had been a conspicuous advertisement sure to pay in the end. On second thought he realized that Roker looked upon the matter in the same light that he did himself. Under the guise of philosophy, Roker had steered the conversation round a very ticklish turning, and had made plain a fact that, if bluntly put, would have been disclaimed and perhaps resented by Mr. Ingledee. As no motive was apparent, Mr. Ingledee suspected no intention in the artifice. Roker's plummet was capable of sounding even a railway king. He continued in the same careless, philosophizing tone:

"I think a man's surroundings have more to do with his success than most people allow."

"I made my way in the world in spite of surroundings," said Mr. Ingledee with a tone of much satisfaction.

"I am aware of your views on this subject, but allow me to illustrate: I was reading the other day some very curious things concerning married men and bachelors. Statistics seem to show that married men lead the bachelors by far in most occupations of life. In some things I think a bachelor should succeed best. For example, the egg gatherers in those northern islands where men take the eggs, hanging meantime by a rope from the side of a dizzy cliff. In such a position the thought of wife and children might render the nerves unsteady. By the way, Mr. Ingledee, did you ever

know any considerable number of bachelors to succeed in Wall Street?"

"Really, that is a question I never thought of."

"I ask for information, and not as a mere matter of curiosity. I have some ambition in that direction myself, you know. Of course in a small way," he added deprecatingly.

"On the whole, I should advise marriage. The social advantages you speak of are all on the side of the married man."

"I think it good advice. You have followed it yourself. Doubtless your son will do the same in due time." Family matters were reached at last.

"My son seems to delight just now in playing the fool rather than in seeking a sensible wife."

"Boys will be boys."

"He is no longer a boy. I am not satisfied with his conduct." Roker was secretly rejoiced. The beginning of confidences between himself and Ingledee was a great step toward the object he had in view. By a convulsive nervous action his scalp suddenly drew itself forward, nearly bringing his hair down to his eyebrows. This movement was the reflex of a sudden thrill of emotion. It instantly ceased, and Roker himself was scarcely conscious of the movement. Ingledee, if he noticed it, said nothing. He always considered it a deformity, and had too much delicacy to take notice of a personal defect.

"Mr. Ingledee, possibly you forget that the conditions of his boyhood are very different from those of your own, if you will excuse comparison. He has great wealth at command and a position to maintain in society."

"And a capacity for playing the tomfool. I tell you it won't do."

"Really, I think you imagine it worse than it is."

"It's bad enough any way." It was very painful for this proud man to allude to the skeleton in his closet, much less discuss it with a stranger. He felt ashamed of even appearing to set a spy on his son's actions, but here was an opportunity which he would improve in spite of his scruples. The reputation and future happiness of his son were at stake, and he could no longer spare his own feelings, or indulge nice scruples. After a brief pause and with an effort, he said:

"Tell me what you really know of Silas."

Ingledee was resigned to hear disagreeable details. Roker

was not prepared to furnish them. As he seldom met Silas in a social way, he really knew little from personal observation. He had heard a great deal, and could if he chose have made, at second hand, some rather unpalatable revelations. But this was no part of his programme. He told a lie by telling only part of the truth.

"Really, I have never seen anything amiss in Mr. Silas. He is a young man with an uncommon appreciation of enjoyment. He loves pleasure. Occasionally, perhaps, he takes more wine, for example, than is necessary. But then wealthy young men all do that and get over it later. I surely think you give these things undue importance. Mr. Silas is young yet." Ingledee felt relieved. He knew Roker to be a man of good habits and sound judgment, a man whose opinion was worth something.

"Thank you, Roker, for saying so. I'm glad to hear you say it."

"Why don't you pick him out a good sensible wife. She would furnish the necessary social ballast to steady him up."

"I should prefer him, for her sake, to steady up first."

"By the way, I thought he was considerably interested in a young lady the night of your ball."

"To whom do you refer?"

"Miss Alice Norwell."

"She is a fine girl."

"And will have a cool million as her share, I understand. That isn't a bad thing in itself."

"Very well in its way." Mr. Ingledee said this, with the tone of a man who is mentally comparing the heir, possessing forty millions, with the *poor* girl who would have only *one* million. "She is an uncommonly fine girl."

"She possesses more discretion, I think, than her brother Tom."

"Possibly, yes, but I think people hardly give Tom Norwell credit for all there is in him. He is impulsive, I grant, but he is every inch a man."

"I grant his good intentions, but, somehow, he never seemed to me as a man of thoroughly balanced character."

Roker had at last learned what he set out to learn. In a case of prospective son-in-law, Tom Norwell would probably lead Horace Roker so far as the father was concerned. Roker's policy was to lay serious but insidious siege to the head of the house, and meantime establish so far as practical, friend-

ly relations with the daughter. His chances would grow with Silas' growing dissipation and uselessness. Should the son become a miserable, worthless wreck as seemed probable, the cool-headed business man who had already learned Wall street would win the prize over the thoughtless Tom Norwell, who was only a good fellow. In his scheme of love, dollars outweighed sighs. It was about time to depart. On rising, Ingledee clasped Roker's hand cordially, and said:

"I know you are willing to help me in this matter. Advise the boy whenever you can without making it too apparent. We all value your judgment highly. Help me. Good-night."

"Good-night."

One walked out under the twinkling stars, trusting his fellow-man, and believing he had a faithful ally. The other, though he had never by overt act wronged any one of a penny, walked forth a heartless villain.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. PIPE MALLEY SEEKS A SITUATION FOR HIS TWIN BROTHER QUILL, AND THE MISSES INGLEDEE AND SNICKER MAKE A CALL IN AN UNFASHIONABLE STREET WHERE A SERIOUS ACCIDENT IS HAPPILY AVERTED.

It is an afternoon of late October in the peculiar Indian summer. The landscape is veiled in a thin, transparent, blue vapor, resembling smoke. There is a delicious balminess in the air, without the sultriness that produces languor. All nature assumes a romantic aspect of serene loveliness. In the city this is marred by the bustle of business, and the black smoke of thousands of chimneys, but nothing surpasses the loveliness of such weather in the country. There the mind unconsciously attunes itself in accord with nature. Care is forgotten, and for a brief spell the elastic spirit springs above the tame routine of life. The dullest soul is touched by nobler impulses, though he may not realize, the source of the beauty around him. He is happy. The person who has a keen appreciation of the beautiful, is in a state of constant delight-

ful enjoyment. Simply to live is a luxury. Poets praise the skies of sunny Italy; but he who has never drank deep draughts of brimming satisfaction 'mid the prodigal beauties of Indian summer, has missed the sweetest pleasure in life.

The forests of oak, ash, elm and maple are gorgeous in flaming scarlet, purple, and gold. The reddening leaves of the sumach illuminate the undergrowth, while its darker tufts stand like sentinels above the foliage in the hedgerows. Here and there by streams and the edges of fields the giant shag-bark hickory is seen with unnumbered splints of flinty bark curled in confusion from its stately trunk. This magnificent tree, whose species is the emblem of a great political party, is very dear to young America, regardless of party. Its delicious nuts are one of the choicest contributions to the amusements of the long winter evenings in the country. In its vicinity may be found the vivacious gray squirrel with his plume-like tail arched over his back, while he squats upright on his hind legs, and dexterously nibbles a nut held in his fore paws. His every movement is the very essence of grace and beauty. When alarmed he scuttles into his hole in a tree, firing off as he goes a volley of comical little yelps, kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk, somewhat resembling the quack of a duck in articulation, but with a different and not unmelodious tone. He begins his musical performance slowly and increases its rapidity until the quacks are very rapid or undistinguishable, according to the degree of his alarm. Sly rascal, his climbing powers give him the advantage over his biped rival, the school boy.

The stately walnut-tree showers on the grass, and leaves its luscious-looking globes of a bright gold which tempt the eye like a rare tropical fruit. Their intensely bitter rind is their safety, for Mr. Squirrel takes them only when there is nothing better. In the rich land by the streams is a small tree with a smooth, almost silvery bark. Its long, glossy, green leaf is now the color of gold. Sparingly on its branches hangs a large clustered fruit, long, and of ample dimensions, which is slowly turning to the same attractive color. It is the luscious pawpaw whose custard like pulp is the delight of those who have learned to relish it, the scorn of those who have not.

In the distance may be heard all day long the busy rattle of a threshing-machine. Crows caw lazily from the decayed top of a tall oak, or wing their heavy flight in long black

lines. The vegetable world proclaims the death of a season, but animated nature is active. The charms of Indian summer are multitudinous. Italy may please with a dreamful sense of perfect ease. America, in this best of all seasons, thrills with an ecstasy of full-waking delights in its active, changeful beauty. Yet the city visitor to the country knows nothing of all this, for he has returned to his grime and smoke before it began.

On such a day Garmand, Wilson and Tom Norwell met in Hickley's office. Wilson, despairing of finding suitable employment in New York at present, intended to start for the West, where he had friends. There he had secured a position as schoolteacher, and had come to bid Hickley good-bye. The conversation turned on the all-absorbing topic of the approaching election. The candidacy of the Hon. Dave Sawder was mentioned in due time, when Norwell remarked:

"Sawder is not a fit man to represent this district or any other in Congress."

"Why not?" asked Hickley.

"His record is not good. He has had too much to do with the railroad legislation of the past few years."

"Those reports were started by his enemies possibly," replied Hickley.

"That may be, but an enemy may get at the truth in such cases much quicker than a friend. For my part, I think if we knew the truth about Sawder's public record we should find him spotted to the core with bribery, more or less direct, inside speculation, and, in short, all sorts of official venality." Hickley winced under this scathing denunciation of Sawder and his methods, but being a politician he was obliged to make black appear white, if possible.

"Norwell, you are prejudiced against Sawder. The American people everywhere recognize him as a man of great ability."

"I'm not disputing his ability."

"You read the 'Daily Censure.' That organ is always abusing somebody. Just now they are making a violent attack upon Sawder. The editor of the 'Censure' wanted his brother placed in a soft spot in the Custom House. Sawder wanted another fellow to have it and he got it. That accounts for such a torrent of editorial indignation and exposure. Two years ago, when Sawder was up for renomination, the same charges were made, and the 'Censure' proved

them, to its own satisfaction at least, to be utterly false and malicious. Now what is their opinion worth?"

"Hickley, I have opinions of my own derived from other sources."

"Granting that Sawder may have used his official knowledge in his own interest to make a little money, it is not claimed that he ever swindled the government, or anybody else, in fact. He is an able man. You can't afford to bolt him just now in this crisis of the party." The party was always in a crisis when bolters were to be whipped into the traces. Just now the party whip was being flourished vigorously on very hand. Voters were provided with backs, and the party with a whip. It was plain that nature intended them to go together.

"I've never said I shouldn't vote for him."

"Why," said Wilson, "you certainly will not vote for a man whom you believe to be unfaithful to his official trust?"

"That must be a very interesting position from a moral standpoint, you know," Garmand allowed.

"Oh, politics and morals have nothing to do with each other," rejoined Tom, with a laugh.

"We must admit that the other party has still less to recommend it," urged Hickley.

"Would you vote for a thief," asked Wilson, "because he wore your party label?"

"This is not a parallel case." Hickley felt that his position was untenable; but he must do the work assigned him, or lose the favor of Sawder and Ophir. In the first place he tried to convince himself that nothing had ever been urged against Sawder which that gentleman had not explained. Some of these explanations were very tardy, and his enemies said they were very flimsy, but they were conclusive to the rank and file of his party, who were anxious to believe. Then his opponent, though personally a very good man, represented an atrociously bad party, at least in the estimation of its opponents. It was a choice of two evils.

"In other words," said Wilson, "stealing is to be done, and you prefer your party should do it." Wilson's remark described in brief how tightly the party collar is riveted on the neck of the average American citizen. By that collar he may be led to the very brink of the most dangerous political chasm. Hickley laughed heartily:

"Pshaw, Wilson, don't talk of stealing. *That* has always

been going on in government ever since there were governments. There must be some of it, no matter who is in or who is out."

"And," added Tom, "if the other fellows ever get in they will empty the treasury, and then sell the capitol for tombstones."

"Marble, is it?" queried Garmand.

"Yes."

"'Pon my soul, a novel idea! Why hasn't it been tried before?" A hearty laugh ensued.

"Perhaps nobody thought it worth while to steal a tombstone," reflected Hickley. "The people furnish that free for political graves."

"Speaking of stealing reminds me that I read last (lost) night about some senator or chap of that kind, you know, trying to encroach on an Indian's reserve. Deuced funny idea that, of stealing a fellow's reserve, for if he was so very reserved, you know, how could the other fellow approach him? Now I cawn't quite see that."

"Oh, a politician can approach anything," replied Norwell. "He can break through any reserve, particularly the Indian's, "though that is the biggest thing about the red man."

"But I think it very unfair to intrude on a man in that way if he chooses to cultivate a reserve."

"But the Indian seldom cultivates his reserve," added Wilson drily.

"Oh, I see, it is natural. Well, it ought to be respected anyhow."

The subject of Indians very naturally led to the subject of hunting. Garmand remarked that he supposed hunting formed an important pastime of the inhabitants in the unexplored forests of the interior.

"Oh, yes," replied Wilson, "everybody hunts in America." He said this in a matter-of-fact, surprised tone, just as he would have replied had he been asked if Americans usually wore shoes.

"A sort of national sport, eh? peculiar to"—he nearly said barbarians, but prudently tacked just in time and added, —"peculiar to Americans, but in Europe confined to the nobility. I've read of some of these great hunts where the people assemble for miles around and drive in the game." The account which Garmand had read was a burlesque on a

hunt by an American newspaper writer. This waif from the vast fund of border humor had made its way across the Atlantic, where it had been reprinted, and assumed all the dignity of history. "In the interior districts they form a circle of miles in extent, you know, and drive in bears, raccoons, buffalo, opossums and other beasts of prey. It must be grand sport. I mean to join such a hunt myself before I return to—aw, Europe. I suppose the peasantry do the driving, and the upper closses have the first chawnce at the shooting and dividing the game. That is the case, you know, the world over, and is a very proper and simple arrangement." The boys were willing to allow Garmand so cheap a pleasure as a circular hunt, and took the cue readily from the information he volunteered.

"Yes, that is about the case here. The peasantry collect for miles, armed with such rude weapons as they possess, usually rifles and Arkansaw toothpicks," replied Wilson.

"Toothpicks! Aw, they end the day with a feast, I infer?"

"Mr. Garmand, you anticipate so often that I really have a suspicion that you know all this already, and could inform us natives concerning many things."

Garmand hastily disclaimed any such intention, and begged that the "chawming narration" might proceed, as he would like to pick up a few additional points of interest.

"As I was saying, the peasantry form a circle several miles in diameter, and gradually closing in, frighten the game toward the center. They call this beating around the bush."

"'Pon my soul, how funny. Now, in England, beating around the bush is about the same thing as going round to the back part of the house and climbing in at the window when you might walk in at the front door."

"That may be as you say," replied Wilson, "but in this country it means just what I have told you. Well, the people advance, shouting, blowing horns and discoursing music on the horse fiddle."

"Horse fiddle! Is that a species of music for the horse guards? Really, you know—I cawn't quite locate that instrument."

"Its chief use is in charivari orchestra. It has nothing to do with a horse, as you infer. It is a peculiar combination of boards and hickory springs, which discourses soul-stirring music, that may be heard at a distance of five miles."

"Suitable for open air concerts?"

"That's the idea exactly. Well, as the men tramp through the woods they beat up each bush with their Arkansaw toothpicks."

"Are these toothpicks so very large?"

"They are sometimes nearly two feet long."

"What—oh, I see. A Yankee joke; well I shall not be ungenerous enough to disallow the Yankee's privilege in having his joke, though it is about a toothpick two feet long. Really, I'd never acknowledge such a toothpick if I were an American, for it implies a very liberal mouth, you know."

"I admit the impeachment, Mr. Garmand," replied Wilson. "I see you draw the line very accurately between fact and fiction. I shall hereafter be very guarded in my statements. As I was saying, they beat up the bushes and out jump the animals and flee."

"Is game so very plenty?"

"Oh, yes; in raspberry time nearly every bush conceals a gormandizing 'possum or a voracious bear, come to feed on the tempting fruit. As they near the inner circle the scene is indescribable. All is wild confusion, in which may be distinguished the piercing notes of the ground hog, the rapid flight of the deer, the plaintive cries of the alarmed bear, the angry snort of the fierce opossum, and the weird wail of the melancholy coon. Once seen it is a sight never to be forgotten."

"I dare say. Then the nobility shoot the game, you say?"

"For once you are in a slight error," remarked Wilson, half apologetically, half confidentially. "In this country we have an absurd law, which forbids the granting of patents of nobility. But the people recognize a nobility, nevertheless, which is pretty well defined by certain titles derived from the simple but poetical language of the aborigines, such as Hornsoggler, Corncraker, Chieftooter, etc. They are distinguished by a very simple device. Their caps are made of coon skin; from the cap of a Hornsoggler dangles one coon's tail; from that of a Corncracker two coons' tails, while a Chieftooter is ornamented by three coons' tails."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the opening of the outer door. A visitor entered who proved on nearer inspection to be Pipe Malley. He stepped confidently forward and inquired for the "boss." Hickley tacitly ad-

mitted that he was the person in question, by inquiring Pipe's wants.

"Be you wantin' a office boy," said Pipe, with the same awkward twisting bow and the same angular scrape of his right boot, the toe of which yawned a little more than when we last saw him.

"I hardly think so," replied Hickley. He had one lazy, noisy cub already to slide down the banisters and make life miserable for his employer and the adjoining tenants.

"He's a bang-up boy, mister."

"Oh, it isn't yourself, then?" said Hickley, scanning him curiously.

"Naw, it's my brother Quill. I'm twins."

"Indeed! You have a place for yourself?" Pipe had judiciously left his kit for blacking boots outside with Quill.

"Oh, I kin git along. Don't yer min' me. I kin pick up a job on the fly. But Quill is sort o' modest like, an' can't rough it. He'll never git along in the shine an' paper business. There's too much composition. Business is all busted up."

"Too much composition?" queried Hickley, with a smile.

"Yes, too many fellers rushin' into business, that makes composition active." As a new boy who rashly competes on forbidden ground is usually subjected to a mellowing process under the blows of half a dozen bootblacks' kits, wielded by as many vigorous arms, composition may indeed be termed active.

"I need no boy at present, young man."

"Say, mister," urged Pipe, "I kin give boss references." He added, confidentially, "I've inflooence, so I has." Hickley could not restrain a laugh. Here was a surprise; the word influence, so potent a talisman in politics, had descended at last to street gamins.

"Oh, you kin laugh, mister, all yer want ter. 'Spect it does sound funny. I hain't no papers to show, but I've a friend that's no slouch, an' one that won't go back on a feller, nuther."

"That is the sort of friend to have."

"Bet yer life it is." At this moment Tom Norwell, Wilson and Garmand emerged from the inner office. "*He* knows her, too," continued Pipe.

"Who knows her?" asked Hickley.

"Why, that tall feller, with light hair," Pipe continued, pointing to Norwell.

"Tom, some of your friends, it seems."

"'Pon my word, that cawn't be. He seems to belong to —to the lower closses, I should say," and Garmand eyed him curiously with his glass.

"Don't you know me, Mr. Norwell," said Pipe, nothing daunted. "We was interduced at Ingledee's. I had a invite there an' you dropped in."

There was an explosion of laughter at Tom's expense, who was pretending he could not think where and when he had seen Pipe, and did not care to have his lady friends discussed publicly by bootblacks.

"What is your name, my boy?" asked Tom.

"Pipe, Pipe Malley, sir," answered the boy in an injured tone, as the catfish boot yawed a trifle to the right.

"Haven't you a brother?"

"Yes, sir. I'm twins."

"You mean that you and he are twins."

"Ain't that wot I jes said? We're both twins, an' if Quill is twins why ain't I, too?" Pipe's ideas of the grammatical, and indeed of the social relations expressed by the word twins, were very hazy.

"I'm awful sorry, mister, you hain't no place for Quill. I've looked round till I'm dead sick of it. I never seed times so hard. Quill can't sneak onto a job, I guess, at all. No use talkin', mother an' me 'll have to raise that boy."

"You'll strike something for him," said Tom, encouragingly.

"'Spect I may, sometime. Must be a hustlin', though," and away he went.

Outside Quill was at that moment executing a breakdown in the hallway, to the great edification of Hickley's office boy and two or three other satellites of the law in a similar humble capacity.

"Stop that racket. Hain't yer ashamed o' yerself, givin' yerself away like that when I'm tryin' to get yer a sitiwation. Some people don't care a straw wot a buddy does fur 'em."

"I wan't a doin' nothin', Pipe," remonstrated Quill, rather mildly.

"Oh, you wusn't, eh? Now you git an' sell the rest o' them Heralses, or I'll maul yer." Quill *got* without argument.

Pipe wended his way toward home, trying to pick up a

little business on the way. Mrs. Malley lived in a narrow, dirty, rickety street east of the Bowery, and not far from that celebrated thoroughfare. She had apartments, if two crazy little rooms may be dignified by that term, in a dilapidated three-story tenement house of very ancient architecture. The rotten brick walls were so cracked, twisted and warped that the whole structure was in imminent danger of tumbling into the street. It would have been condemned long ago by the board of health as dangerous and unfit for human habitation if the owner had not been an alderman for years. He was a *professional* alderman, and the reader who has ever resided for a term of years in a great city will know at once what that means. It means poverty and trickery to begin on, official corruption, fine houses, fine clothes, fine dinners to end on. No doubt there are honest men among aldermen, just as occasionally an honest man has the misfortune to get into the penitentiary. It is said that the devil is not so black as he is painted, and perhaps it would only be fair to give the *professional* alderman the benefit of the same doubt.

The rickety wooden-stairs of this tenement-house were so worn, decayed, and eaten through by the continual tramping of feet for years, that to ascend them in the dark was an undertaking full as dangerous as the ascent of the pyramids. In the narrow street might be seen at all times of day or evening blear-eyed, slatternly women, scantily-clad, sickly-looking children, and besotted, shambling creatures to whom the term man must be applied, because there is no other name for them, and because it would be a gross libel on dumb creatures to call them brutes. Noise, brawling and obscenity prevailed day and night, especially by night. Mrs. Malley had in this unpromising locality undertaken the grave responsibility of "raising" twins, her husband having died years ago. She was an aristocrat among the miserable tenants of this locality, for her lodgings were on the ground floor. Besides, as an adjunct to her laundry business, she had the use of a miserable, little dirty patch of back yard to which the less fortunate were denied access.

Pipe was sauntering leisurely along, whistling a popular campaign air, when he spied two ladies driving into the other end of the street. Further examination revealed the pony and phaeton of Miss Chetta Ingledee, who was out driving with her friend, Miss Snicker. Pipe saw them approaching, and when he discovered indications that they intended to stop

he flew into the house in breathless haste to inform his mother. That female was in the rear room, with sleeves rolled up and hands in the wash-tub. Pipe's excitement was so great that he was for a few seconds unable to utter a word. Mrs. Malley had seen him several times before in this condition, which had been occasioned by his choking when a rapid consumption of food was imperatively demanded, lest Quill should get more than his share. Pipe's organs of deglutition were slightly defective owing to some fault of nature, while Quill's were abnormally vigorous. Mrs. Malley's remedy was a sound shaking. She seized Pipe without ceremony by the collar, and gave him such an exceedingly lively shaking that his face grew scarlet in a short time.

"Can I teach ye no manners?" (another shake). "What's the use of eatin' like a pig?" (more shaking). "Ye haven't the throat of a allergater to swally stuff in chunks" (another shake).

"Lem'me go, I say."

"Is it out?"

"Wot's the matter with yer? I wasn't swallern' anything," said Pipe indignantly, as he wiped soapsuds from his eyes and face. "Yer a little too suddint."

"What ails ye, Pipey honey?" said Mrs. Malley soothingly.

"Nothin'! I come to tell yer my Sunday-school teacher is comin' to visit us."

"Yer don't say, Pipe! Is she truly? Don't tell your mother a story."

"She's jist druv into the upper end of the street."

Mrs. Malley rushed into the front "parlor," and, sure enough, a phaeton stood in front of the house. The two young ladies in it were evidently inquiring of some children the whereabouts of some person they wished to see. Mrs. Malley now in turn fell into a condition of extreme excitement. Here was unexpected company of a very high order, and everything in confusion. But Mrs. Malley was a captain, equal to such a surprise. She ordered Pipe to gather up the soiled linen which strewed the floor, together with old newspapers in which the articles had been wrapped. These were hastily dumped into the back room. Mrs. Malley seized a broom and vigorously swept up the ashes round the little grate. This operation which had not been performed for a twelvemonth from appearance, was done with amazing dis-

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patch and accompanied by a cloud of dust and ashes. On the narrow mantel-shelf was a little clock flanked on either side by pipes, belonging to Mrs. Malley, little tobacco sacks in different stages of depletion, matches, a broken comb "done up" by Pipe, a little box of spools, buttons, etc., and a great deal of dirt. It was impossible to bring order out of this chaos in a moment. So at one fell swoop, Mrs. Malley brushed everything but the clock into her apron and carried them to the back room.

"Pipe, where's the Bible the teacher give ye? Put that on the mantel." The volume was produced from a cupboard, and Mrs. Malley was in the last stages of "putting things to rights," namely polishing with her apron the only two chairs of four, which, though very decrepit, were able for duty. In the prevailing excitement she had forgotten to turn down her sleeves till reminded by Pipe:

"Mother, mother, unroll them sleeves down." There was a knocking at the door, and the bustle within subsided instantly into a dignified decorum. Mrs. Malley called out, "Come in," but after a pause the knock was repeated. "Come in" was the answer this time, loud enough to be heard in the street. In the society in which Mrs. Malley moved, it was not customary to open the door for a visitor. The genteel thing was to await him within in dignified expectation. Miss Ingledee opened the door and entered, followed by Harrie Snicker. Mrs. Malley, with the cordiality which is so marked a characteristic of her race, greeted her visitors with a hearty shake of the hand. Her language had in it so little of the brogue of the Emerald Isle as to be scarcely noticeable.

"How do ye do, Miss Ingledee? I'm real glad ye've called."

"I'm very well, thank you. This is my friend, Miss Snicker, Mrs. Malley."

The big red hand of Mrs. Malley reached out and grasped heartily the delicate right hand of Miss Snicker, to the great surprise of that young lady. It was as yielding and expressionless as pie dough, and when released by Mrs. Malley fell limp by the owner's side; Miss Snicker's little nose, however, protested slightly against the indignity put upon her hand by seeking a loftier altitude.

"It's not every day I has company, an' things may be a trifle out o' order. Ye can't always have things as trig as a tay rose," said the hostess, glancing around her shabby little room apologetically.

"Indeed, you look very cosy here, Mrs. Malley."

"We get along, somehow. It's a hard scrabble for the poor, ma'am, an' God bless ye ladies for remembering them. Won't ye be seated, ladies?"

The visitors excused themselves on the ground that they had not time to tarry. It is a noticeable fact that the millionaire may be so exceedingly busy doing nothing as to find himself crowded for time, the same as a poor man. During these preliminaries of conversation Pipe had been in the back room. The boldest boys among their companions are often the most bashful at home. The boy who will lead a raid on a melon patch, or aspire to be the hero of the Fourth of July by climbing a greased pole before a thousand people, will slip into the house the back way, when his mother has company. When asked to go into the parlor he looks very much like a chicken thief detected in the act. Eating in company is to him a miserable delusion. Though he have the appetite of a shark, as he always does, he has been known to insult his stomach with bread crusts and a glass of stale water rather than ask for more. On the occasion of a rural tea the old ladies are so immersed in the latest gossip as to forget all about the boy who is so unfortunate to eat with the "company." A second tea along with the hired girl is the result. He is not used to high living, and the unusual spread is a feast. He checks his hunger with substantials of bread, butter, potatoes and chicken, washed down by four cups of coffee. He evens up with half an apple pie, country apple pie, at that, half a custard pie, and a plate of rice pudding. He tops off with two saucers of preserved peaches, a saucer of jelly, all the cream there was left from the first table—and a colic at ten that night. A tea is a rare event for the country boy. Pipe would have been that sort of a boy, had he lived in the country. His mother called:

"Pipe, come in. Your teacher is here." The latter information was a piece of strategy by way of apology for his non-appearence. Pipe came in sheepishly, with Quill at his heels, the latter having sold his "Heralses" in time to be in at this great social event. Chetta greeted them cordially, and somehow they felt at ease under the influence of her unaffected, winning manner.

"How are you, Pipe? Come in, Quill."

"I'm all O K," said Pipe. Quill said nothing. Since Pipe was *the* twin, there seemed to be an understanding that his answer sufficed for both.

"You know I promised you a call, boys."

"I was afeerd you'd forgit it. This hain't as nice a street as them avenoos." There was a volume of philosophy in Pipe's simple remark which Chetta did not fail to perceive.

"Pipe, you know I promised."

"So you did, an' I guess you ain't the forgittin' kind." Chetta smiled, and turning to her friend, said: "Harrie, I haven't introduced you yet, excuse me. These are Pipe and Quill Malley, the boys you have heard me mention so often." The boys made their usual awkward attempt at a bow, but Miss Snicker made no sign of recognition whatever beyond a slightly increased elevation of her little nose, whose angle with the perpendicular had been growing ever since her arrival. She eyed them with a faintly curious stare, as she would any other curiosity which she had heard considerable about. It was evident she saw nothing in the twins. They were very *common*, so was Mrs. Malley, so were the surroundings. The only uncommon thing that she could discover was that Chetta Ingledee should visit such a place at all, or ask her friend to do so. She inquired:

"Hadn't we better be going?"

"Yes, I think so."

"I'm dreadful glad you took hold of my boys," said Mrs. Malley. She meant the verb hold in a figurative sense. She reserved the literal for herself. "I couldn't edicate them as I'd like, for as I said, it's a hard scrabble for the poor, and close fit to go to school isn't easy got, an' poor close doesn't look well beside fine ones. They read beootiful in their Bibles," she added with pride, pointing to the lonesome Testament on the shelf. "Pipe used to have to spell every word, and sometimes bit his tongue dreadful when vexed. Now he kin go clean through a chapter, an' never open his mouth." This was no small compliment, for to "go through" a chapter without moving the lips is a triumph in the art of silent reading which many very respectable people have never achieved. Mrs. Malley was anxious that everything should show to the advantage of her boys on this momentous occasion.

The reading of the twins, one would infer from her remarks, was chiefly Biblical. Facts compel an admission that this was not the case. After learning to read, the boys, as a matter of course, became acquainted with that remarkable production of literature, the dime novel, if such trash

may be called literature. They had procured one highly-seasoned volume called "Red-handed Hank, or the Desperado of Dead Man's Gulch." Mrs. Malley's ideas of family government were exceedingly liberal. In this respect, indeed, she was thoroughly American, for there was next to no family government in her establishment, except on rare occasions of flagrant misdemeanor. She had her reasons for this state of affairs in the fact that her family needed little government; "for sure the boys couldn't injure anything but theirselves, an' they might look out for that."

On one point she was particular: they must be in bed at ten o'clock. Sound rest she found indispensable to her arduous labor at the wash-tub. The twins thought night was the best time for literary diversion. Probably it added a weird effect to the gore which figuratively streaked the pages of "Red-handed Hank." Pipe soon hit on a plan to circumvent the old lady. After she was sound asleep, the twins stole from their bed, kindled a little fire in the grate, and, prone on their stomachs, absorbed the thrilling story of "Red-handed Hank." The fire was carefully fed by one boy while the other read. The fuel was thin slips of cannel coal stolen from a neighboring coal yard. They read night about. Silent reading was here a necessity, and thus it was achieved. Truly the pursuit of literature is often attended with great difficulties.

Miss Harrie Snicker was growing impatient at the length to which the visit was stretching itself out. Chetta, seeing this, remarked:

"Really, we must be going, Mrs. Malley."

The hostess seemed uneasy. After some hesitation she said: "I'd invite you to tay, ladies, if I was a little better fixed. But things is a little unhandy like just now."

With thanks Chetta bade them a kind good-day, and the visitors took their leave. The Malleys were overwhelmed and delighted at such a great social event, which was remembered for years as a chronological era. Other events in the flight of time were located so long before or so long after Miss Ingledee came on a visit.

Miss Harrie Snicker was not quite happy. Her mind was troubled lest she had done something *common*. This imaginary alarm was soon displaced by a real one. As they turned out of the narrow street on their way up town, they saw ahead a runaway horse hitched to an express wagon.

He was tearing down the street at a frightful pace, and people were scampering for dear life. Harrie, in an agony of fear uttered a shriek of alarm. Chetta knew she could rely on her cool-headed little pony, and with steady arm attempted to turn him quickly toward the sidewalk, thus giving the runaway plenty of room. To her horror her companion sprang from the phaeton directly in the track of the runaway, and stood immovable as a statue, but screaming with fright.

Her cries attracted the attention of a foppishly-dressed young man who happened to be passing. He dropped his cane and sprang to her rescue, dragging her away just in the nick of time. The frightened horse swerved to avoid her, this movement causing the wagon to swing round from a straight course. It struck the young man, upsetting him full in the muddy gutter, and bruising him considerably. Miss Harrie escaped uninjured, but her rescuer presented a rueful appearance as he picked himself out of the mud. His stylish low-crowned hat was ruined. A hub of the wagon had struck him, making a long, dingy streak of axle-grease on his light pants. He had been thrown so violently as to burst his neat-fitting coat at the shoulders. Black, slimy mud from the gutter completed the ruin.

As soon as Miss Snicker had recovered her scattered senses, she gave a little scream of surprise. The gentleman was Mr. Bradley, an intimate friend of hers, and an admirer.

"Oh, Mr. Bradley, protect me. I'm so nervous I can hardly stand." Her appeal was rather tardy, seeing that all danger was past. "Oh, I shall faint."

"I think there is no further danger just now," said Bradley, looking ruefully at his ruined clothes.

"I'm glad you think so. Take me home to pa. What would have happened if you had not come to my rescue?"

"You would have been run over most likely," coolly replied Chetta, who sat in the phaeton, smiling in spite of herself at the ludicrous side of the accident.

"Oh, don't say it! That would have been really awful," said Harrie with a shudder.

Mr. Bradley bowed to Miss Ingledee with the best grace a man can muster in the presence of a charming young lady when he is spattered with mud from head to foot, his coat nearly ripped from his back, axle grease on his pants, and his hat a shapeless wreck. Chetta returned his greeting with a few words of real sympathy.

"You have performed a heroic act at great personal danger, Mr. Bradley. I really hope you are not seriously injured."

"Nothing but a lively shaking up and a few slight bruises I believe," replied Bradley, trying to look unconcerned.

"I'm so sorry," exclaimed Harrie Snicker, "and I thank you so much. It is too bad, I declare. Why, your coat is ripped, and there is grease on"—she came very near saying pants, but dexterously steered clear of what would in her mind have been a very indelicate allusion, and said—"on your hat."

Bradley, trying unsuccessfully to appear indifferent, said it was nothing. In reality it was to him a great deal. He was on a salary of twenty dollers per week, one-half of which was necessary to procure respectable board and lodging. A new suit meant a great deal to him. He was one of those resolute young men of the present day who have in their hearts a *great purpose.* He was trying to enter good society, and maintain on a meager stipend a precarious foothold among people who had plenty of money, not only to spend but to throw away. He was endeavoring to determine by continuous experiment how many *nice* young ladies he could get acquainted with, how many round dances he could accomplish, how many late suppers he could devour, how much frivolity and shallow experiences he could undergo short of physical exhaustion and mental stagnation. This, with the maintenance of a good shape and a pink complexion, constituted the great purpose to which he was heroically devoted. One of the episodes in this purpose was his acquaintance with Miss Harrie Snicker. As a little knot of spectators had gathered at the scene of the accident the ladies deemed it best to withdraw. Bradley assisted Miss Snicker into the phaeton and they were off.

"I'm sorry for him," said Chetta, "his clothes are completely ruined."

"I'm sorry, too; but wasn't it just too funny?"

"It would not have been very funny if you had been run over."

"Oh, I didn't mean *that!* But wasn't it too comical to see him sprawling on all fours and his hat spinning on the sidewalk."

"Harrie, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to make fun of a man who has done you such a great service."

"I can't help laughing. Of course I know it was real nice of him to do it." Had he rescued her from the sixth story of a burning building it would have been in Harrie Snicker's eyes simply *nice*. She could discern nothing brave or heroic in this world any more than she could touch anything common. Chetta drove Harrie home and then returned to her own. To her surprise she found Silas in the house. Remembering she had been remiss in sisterly duties, she determined to have a serious talk with her brother at once, the first she had ever attempted.

CHAPTER X.

MR. INGLEDEE ATTEMPTS TO READ HIS FAMILY A LESSON ON SOCIAL DUTIES.

In pursuance of this intention Chetta went up stairs and knocked at the door of her brother's sitting room, which he facetiously called his study. There were books lying around the room plentifully, but they were not of the kind that required study, being exclusively light literature. On the wall hung a lithograph of the Ingledee steam yacht. There were pictures of fast trotters and of mythological females in scanty drapery. Statuettes and various bric a-brac were strewn around promiscuously, together with numerous fancy pipes, cigar holders, whips, and suspicious looking bottles of various shapes and sizes, some very stout and fat, and others very slender. In truth, the young man had never done an hour's study since leaving college two years before. His career at the University terminated rather abruptly in his sophomore year, owing to his having engaged in some playful pastimes denominated hazing. This scandalous relic of barbarism was just to the taste of the young man and his reckless companions. Unfortunately it did not agree so well with the victim, who was crippled for life. In consequence, the participants in this lively amusement were "rusticated," civil proceedings instituted by the victim's father, and the matter finally settled by a handsome sum paid in hand to the injured young man by the fathers of the playful young men who originated the sport.

"Hello, Chet, is that you?" he exclaimed, in genuine surprise, for this brother and sister were in fact almost strangers to each other.

"Of course it is. Can't you see?" she replied, dropping into a chair.

"What do you want?"

"Nothing; come to visit you, that's all."

"Well, that knocks me out in one round."

"What?"

"The idea."

"What idea?"

"Why your coming to see me, hang it."

"I'm welcome, I suppose?"

"Of course, Chet; you're always welcome," he replied heartily. "Make yourself at home. How d'ye like the pictures? Things are a little bit shaken up here. Got some good books if you'd like to read them."

"No, thank you, brother. I'm reading 'Prescott's Conquest of Mexico' in the library."

"Well now, I am done up completely."

"What do you mean, Silas?"

"Why, the idea of your reading such books. I don't read them if I know it."

"Don't you think it would be nice to take one evening a week and read with me? We could explain to each other, you know." Silas stared with incredulous astonishment.

"Chet, are you out of your head? I never heard of such a thing in all my life."

"There's nothing very extraordinary in reading one evening per week, is there?"

"It's wasting one evening per week so far as I am concerned. I'm too busy for that."

"What busies you?"

"Why society, of course. A fellow must keep in the swim or drop out altogether."

"Pshaw! You can go when you choose and stay when you choose, but if I had to make a ninny of myself by going, I should say drop out."

"Sister, you *are* out of your head."

Chetta, unheeding his manner, went on: "Silas, don't you think it would be better for you if you gave up some of your associations?"

"Now, see here, that is just what father has been preach-

ing. "Don't you begin it, for it will do no good. I intend to have a good time, and when I get ready I'll settle down of my own accord."

"When you get ready may be too late."

"It is never too late to do good."

This old maxim just suited the present need of the young man, though in his case it was a very black lie. He forgot that the sweetest grass grows in the spring, that the morning sun is full of life, that youth paints a picture to gladden old age or plunge it in remorse.

On this particular afternoon Mr. Ingledee happened to leave his office early, and learned that his children were both at home. He sent a servant to call them to his own cosy reading room. He was pleased to see them together. His daughter was evidently carrying out his instructions. Had he been as wise in these little details of family management as he was in mere money getting, he might have seen that this tiny germ of friendship between his children was too feeble to bear any forcing. Left to itself it might develop into a hardy plant. Any forcing process might smother it effectually. He greeted them cheerfully.

"Ah, my children, we shall have a family reunion, something that doesn't occur now very often, I'm sorry to say."

"Yes, somehow this family fails to connect," said Silas, in a careless, flippant tone, which he made no effort to correct in the presence of his father and sister.

"I hope we shall improve in that respect. Chetta, what do you say to having more company here?"

"Anything you wish, papa."

"I vote that a bore," said Silas; "I want some place where I can be quiet now and then."

"We should have quiet company," said Mr. Ingledee in a tone of mild rebuke.

"The greater the bore then."

"You might," continued Mr. Ingledee, addressing Chetta, "have a card party or something of the sort occasionally. Those small informal parties are to my mind the most delightful features of social life."

"But deucedly stupid," said Silas.

Without noticing Silas's implied sneer, Mr. Ingledee continued:

"There are abundant materials at hand of course. For

example, the Norwells, the Snickers, the Aplingtons, the Brownells."

"You couldn't find a more stupid lot," said Silas.

"Why brother! What an idea. The Norwells are very superior people, and the Snickers—"

"Are a set of conceited idiots."

"They are eminently respectable people, and move in the best circles," said Mr. Ingledee. "As for the Norwells, there is not a family in the city that has a better position in society. Their standing is the best; they are well educated and refined. They have abundant means to gratify their tastes."

This encomium, the more significant as it was unusual on the part of Mr. Ingledee, gave Chetta a thrill of delight. She had long hoped to be able to have Tom Norwell as a recognized lover. But, somehow, in spite of their extended and intimate acquaintance, things made no apparent progress in that direction. Here was a substantial and unexpected recognition of an acquaintance, which she had heretofore feared had not the hearty approval of her father. She was only too glad to acquiesce in the paternal suggestion. Had Mr. Ingledee stopped here all might have been well. But he had neglected his family so long that he felt there was lost time to be made up. As is usual in such cases, his zeal carried him too far. Glancing at the clock, he remarked to Chetta that it was time for her to dress for dinner. She at once withdrew, suspecting he had something to say to Silas.

"Silas, I should like to see you a little oftener. Really, we are scarcely acquainted."

"You can always see me by appointment, you know." This word appointment applied to the family relation had in it such a suggestion of utter indifference that a great pain filled the father's heart. He dearly loved this son who was everything to him. He had toiled like a slave for this boy, and lavished upon him everything which wealth could buy. The son took it all as a matter of course, but had nothing to give in return. Mr. Ingledee suddenly realized a great want in his existence, a void which his millions could not fill. He felt in an instant that, having won a thousand battles in life, he had lost the greatest of them all in failing to win the obedience of his son. But pride enabled him to conceal his wounded feelings.

"Do you not think it well, Silas, for us to meet occasionally other than by accident or appointment?"

"Possibly. But the fact is, my time is all taken up, and I suppose yours is, too. Really, I think there would be a great saving in appointments."

Mr. Ingledee saw at once that it was useless to pursue that subject. If he could not have a spontaneous offering of love he would see whether he could have obedience.

"Silas, I hope you will encourage your sister's efforts in a social direction by your presence."

"I encouraged her by four hours' presence at her ball, and missed in consequence some rare shooting with some particular friends. Lost the whole trip we had planned. Wasn't that something?" He spoke in an injured tone as if he had endured martyrdom on the occasion referred to.

"That was your duty, my son. These lesser social occasions may be made a real pleasure."

"They are awfully dull. Regular tea-party people who say and do stupid things."

"Silas, your flippancy scarcely becomes you."

"Father, I am not flippant. I do think those small parties a bore."

"That is because you have not learned to appreciate good society. Social intercourse with people of refinement and culture is certainly a desirable thing for any young man who wishes to improve his mind and his manners. For example, the Norwells are very interesting people. Miss Alice Norwell is a charming young lady."

"Rather precise."

"But intelligent."

"And peculiar. Ought to wear bloomers, and that sort of thing."

"Don't speak disrespectfully of my friends, sir!"

"Aren't your friends subject to criticism like other people? If they are not, don't put them in the way. I prefer to select my own friends."

The conversation had drifted into a very dangerous channel. When Roker had cunningly suggested that Mr. Ingledee should select a wife for Silas, he knew that such a proceeding would inevitably cause a breach between father and son. Silas suspected such an intention on the part of his father, and promptly resented it. In extolling Miss Norwell's accomplishments, the father, in fact, had no idea of recommending her to his son as a suitable wife. He thought of her as a sensible, refined woman. Association with such women

would greatly improve his son. The advantages accruing to her from such association were not apparent, but like many parents in such cases where worthless sons are to be saved (?) he did not consider that side of the question. He ignored the fact that sugar and vinegar make no cider, and the sugar is lost, too. After a moment's pause, during which Silas toyed rather impatiently with his watch chain, the father asked:

"Have you thought any more about going into the office?"

"It is my intention to do so ultimately."

"Silas, it takes years to learn business and acquire business habits. Meantime, if anything should happen to me you should be able to take charge of our large interests."

"In that case I should retire from business."

"Why?" asked Mr. Ingledee, with secret alarm.

"Well, the fact is, the people are suspicious of Wall street. They consider it dangerous and a public nuisance."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Ingledee, in astonishment, "do you mean to say that you consider Wall street a nuisance?"

"I said nothing of the sort. I only repeated what the public already thinks, as you are doubtless aware."

"I am surprised at your paying any attention to such idle remarks."

"Please do not misunderstand me, father. Some people think it would be much better for the country if the stock-gambling crowd in Wall street were wiped out of existence. My individual opinion, doubtless, is of no consequence whatever. But as our money was all made there, I shall not go back on the street," saying which he rose to dress for dinner.

"Oh, certainly not. Our interests are there. To do so would be madness."

Mr. Ingledee was greatly relieved to think that his son was sound on this one point at least. Silas went up stairs to his apartments. Mr. Ingledee, with a worn expression which he had exhibited at times lately, sat with his head resting on his hand. For the first time in his life the railway king was foiled. For the first time he knew a great and grievous disappointment.

On this same day Mr. Norwell called at Ophir's office to inquire how the Continental & Pacific was getting along. He was in high spirits. Mr. Ophir was also in a buoyant frame of mind. He ceased reading some important letters to greet his old friend cordially.

"Everything is working splendidly. Sawder is confident

we shall succeed. He has lately had a conference with Senator Sublet, who has charge of the Senate for our bill. Sublet says the bill can be rushed through sometime during the last month of the session." Ophir spoke of Sublet having charge of the United States Senate much as if that august body had been a traveling minstrel troupe or a circus. He might have said, with more modesty, that Sublet had charge of the bill in the Senate. Instead, he merely, as was habitual with him, said that Sublet had charge of the Senate. This mighty Sublet was vigorously seconded by the almighty dollar which strictly speaking, had charge of the bill. As Ophir knew where the dollars came from, he had no reason to speak doubtfully, or with indifference.* A single dollar is modest, a million bold, fifty millions shameless; hence, there was no question about the bill going through.

"As you perceive," continued Ophir, "the stock has advanced two points this week. It will soon reach par."

"I am well satisfied with it," observed Mr. Norwell. He could not well be otherwise. He held ten thousand shares bought at fifty-five. In one month it had risen six cents on the dollar. With every cent advance he made ten thousand dollars. From a financial point of view it was certainly a good thing.

"Are you quite sure there is no doubt about securing the necessary legislation?"

"None whatever," said Ophir, with a contemptuous laugh. "Why, you see, Norwell, most of the men in Congress who have the brains or the influence to endanger the bill, are friends of the measure. Oakesworth has seen them, and I am told he uses very convincing arguments." He did not add that the convincing arguments were in the tangible shape of stock in the "Credit Construction Company" that paid fabulous dividends monthly and cleared some forty millions in building this "great public necessity, the "Continental & Pacific Railway."†

"But the newspapers?"

"Well, the big editors have been silenced either by the same process or by the party whip. Some have relations in office, others want relatives put into office. As for the small-fry editor, he isn't posted, any way. The Continental and Pacific amended bill will be urged as a party measure,

*See Note 3.—Corruption money. †See Note 1.—Credit Mobilier swindle.

and, of course, most people think their party can do no wrong."

"It seems to be a reasonably sure thing."

"It's dead sure. I wish I could control more of it. But it is a great interest and requires heavy backing."

Considering the fact that the government was expected to build these roads and virtually present them to Ophir, Ingledee, and a few others, it would seem as if the backing was very good. At a later period, when these unscrupulous men, realizing what they could do with impunity, had determined to "gobble" everything, Mr. Norwell would not have been offered any such golden opportunities to make money.

"Norwell, I can let you have some more if you will take it at once. A certain heavy capitalist wanted forty thousand shares reserved for him, but he now declines to take the stock."

"Can I have it at the original fifty-five?"

"Couldn't possibly do that, even for an old friend. Why, it's quoted to-day at sixty-one."

"I'll take it," said Mr. Norwell, after figuring a few minutes. "Forty thousand shares will require an advance of two hundred thousand dollars."

"Yes."

'I'll draw my check now."

Stupendous as this transaction was, it will appear more clearly in its true light by the aid of a little figuring. Mr. Norwell now owned fifty thousand shares of Continental and Pacific stock, or a par value of five million dollars. Every time his stock advanced one cent on the dollar he would clear fifty thousand dollars. For every cent decline he would lose a similar amount. A decline of twenty cents on the dollar would cause a loss of one million dollars, a sum which may easily wipe out a fortune of twice or thrice that amount in case of sudden demands for ready cash. Norwell was called a cool-headed business man, yet he had converted safe property into unsafe. He was in the condition of a man who spreads his couch on a large chest of dynamite and lies down to pleasant dreams. So long as there is no violent shock he is safe, and sleeps as soundly as in a feather bed. But a sudden jar, a mighty explosion, a rain of wreck, a dazed community, and all is over.

CHAPTER XI.

"OUT WEST." RURAL AMUSEMENTS.

It is near the holidays, and the broad prairies of Illinois are covered with a glistening mantle of snow that is crisp and ringing with the frost. A stinging Dakota blizzard from what some wag has facetiously termed the banana belt, has raged for three days. During those trying days the thermometer dropped to thirty degrees below zero Fahrenheit. The air was filled with a cutting mist of frost crystals, moving at the rate of forty to fifty miles per hour. The best built houses fail to keep out this icy fluid, which penetrates the thickest clothing to the very marrow in the bones.

The ruddy glow of a huge stove, filled with anthracite at red heat, gives an appearance of comfort to the cosy parlor. But the appearance is deceptive, for the searching wind which has chased the skurrying snow over a thousand miles of unbroken prairie, causes a sense of chill within a few feet of the stove with its fiery interior. The human beings who are obliged to stir about at such a time are coated, mittened and wrapped till they resemble animated bundles of woolens. Cold iron burns the skin with a sensation exactly similar to that caused by hot iron. Wagon wheels creak and screech with a shrill sound to be heard for a mile. Car wheels have a ringing, rasping squeak that sends a shudder through the unfortunate passenger who is obliged to travel in such weather.

The blizzard has subsided. On every hand stretches the snowy ocean of prairie from Indiana to the Rocky Mountains. The prairie is a mystery. No one knows just how it came. It is an ocean arrested in the act of undulation. The sea is by turn solemn or full of danger. The lofty mountain oppresses by its sublimity. The prairie now smiling, now bleak, is ever full of wild beauty and inviting mystery. Man has dotted it with farmhouses, villages and cities, marring one beauty, adding another. Nature decks it in beautiful flowers in season or robes it with a mantle of golden grain. It is the garden of the world and the paradise of the farmer.

On a crisp, pleasant day, late in December, Tom Norwell stepped from a Pullman car at a small way station in Illinois. Around the little pine depot were the usual number of boys and loungers, some waiting the arrival of the mail, some with no business. As the postmaster picked up the mail sack which was tossed on the platform, Norwell accosted him:

"Do you know a Mr. Bryce?"

"First rate."

"Where does he live?"

"Out north four miles. Take the road due north to the Bryce schoolhouse, then go a mile west." So saying he shouldered the mail sack and walked away.

Tom was somewhat taken back at the curt manner in which this man had answered his questions. The brief replies were right to the point and yet they were far from satisfactory. I challenge the world to produce a better man than the average American. He is active, industrious, honest, manly. He is hospitable, courteous to women, and no stickler about trifles. He never quarrels over a nickel, and this, in some things, renders him easily imposed on because he is ashamed to appear small in anything. But you must understand him and know how to get at him before all of these qualities are apparent. He has no meaningless profusion of politeness for either friend or stranger, like that of the bowing Frenchman, the dignified Spaniard, or the crafty Oriental. He will answer a question briefly, perhaps, if he is in a hurry, gruffly, and go about his business, expecting you to do the same. His hospitality, unless he is a Southerner, is not very apparent on the surface, but the genuine article is a part of his very nature. When he gets better acquainted with you and finds that you are really worth becoming his friend, he invites you into his house to associate freely with his family, and spares no pains to make you comfortable. He and his will undergo almost any inconvenience that the guest may enjoy himself.

Tom Norwell, though brought up in an American city, and priding himself on being an American, knew little more of rural life in this country than he did of life in China. He had expected some one to meet him at the train, for he had written Wilson informing him which train he would arrive on. This was indeed a chilly reception. He asked a boy:

"What is the best way to get to Bryce's?"

"Hire a rig, I guess." Another boy spoke up at this juncture, saying that Mr. Bryce was in town.

"I'll show you where he is. You can go out with him." Just then a farmer appeared around the corner and the boy added, "There he is now."

"Be you the gentleman from New York comin' to visit Mr. Wilson?"

"I am. My name is Norwell."

"And mine is Bryce."

A hearty shake of the hand followed. Mr. Bryce was a large, well-built, ruddy-faced man, with pleasant blue eyes and shaggy, light-colored whiskers. He wore an immense overcoat, which had seen much service, coarse cassimere clothing, heavy, thick-soled boots, a fur cap and enormous buckskin driving gloves, with well-worn fur tops. In his hand he carried a whip.

"Come right along," he said, seizing Tom's satchel. "Been waitin' fur you. Team's up in town." Mr. Bryce led the way to the conveyance, which consisted of a wagon body mounted on bob sleds. "Get right in. Gyep, there!" and away they went at a rattling trot. The sleighing was superb except when they were obliged to flounder out of the beaten track to let teams they met go by. Mr. Bryce made it a point never to allow anybody to pass him from behind. They spun merrily along, the farmer talking incessantly. They passed an occasional farmhouse, but otherwise the road ran straight as a die through a monotonous waste of snow-covered prairie. It was a vast deserted avenue bounded by miles of unsightly wire fence inclosing fields, each of which, as Bryce remarked, would make a farm down East. Had it not been for the occasional buildings and the interminable wire fences one could easily have imagined himself on a frozen sea, for not a tree was near nor a living thing to break the stillness of a Northwestern winter. Away to the north might be seen a belt of scraggy timber. In a very short time the four miles were done, and Mr. Bryce drew up before his own door.

The house was a large, two-story frame structure with the side facing the road, and a one-story kitchen forming an L. In front were evergreen trees and a gravel walk. The house was painted white, after the usual fashion of the country. In the rear were the capacious barn, corn crib and other outbuildings. Several sleek cows took advantage of the

winter's sun by standing very close to the warm pine boards on the south side of the barn. A herd of big fat hogs munched corn or rooted lazily in a rear lot. The barnyard fowls pecked carelessly in the litter, or, perching on a board fence, sunned themselves and dressed their plumage. Occasionally an aggressive bird, after a fashion sometimes set by its human fellows, gave a neighbor an unmerciful peck which resulted in much noise and some feathers. A large wood shed, joined to the rear of the kitchen, was abundantly stored with coal and wood. On one side of this shed was an immense binful of corn cobs for kindling. Frequently the golden corn itself had been used for fuel, as cheaper than either wood or coal. The whole scene indicated the home of a well-to-do, enterprising Illinois farmer. Tom was met at the gate by his friend Wilson, who took him into the house.

"Go right in, and make yourself at home," said Mr. Bryce. "I've no end of chores to do. You'll have to take things as you ketch 'em here, I guess." In such a comfortable place you might take things as you caught them and find them excellent too.

"I'll come out and help you with the chores," said Wilson. It was Saturday, and there was no school.

"No you won't, I reckon. You stay right in the house and talk with your friend. You see, to-morrow's Sunday, an' that's about the best chance I'll have at him. So I'll count on to-morrow for my turn."

"All right," said Wilson, and they went into the house. Tom was duly introduced to Mrs. Bryce and the daughter, May Bryce, an only child. Mrs. Bryce greeted the guest cordially; the daughter was shy but not awkward.

"Take your friend into the parlor, Mr. Wilson, and entertain him. May and I have to make preparations for Sunday." These preparations consisted in making unlimited pies, cookies, and fried cakes and in dressing a pair of fine chickens for Sunday dinner. These occupations are often if not generally the most refining within the sphere of the farmer's wife. Added to them are usually an "old settler's" meeting once a year, the county fair, one picnic and a few visits. As a rule she gets so little time for reading that she loses the capacity for it, or what is worse, the desire did she possess the books, which she does not as a general thing.

It was evident that the parlor was not for everyday use, but was the best room. It was scrupulously neat. The fur-

niture was substantial, and in its time had been stylish. The carpet was good, for there were no stamping boys in the Bryce family to carry terror to the hearts of the women by tracking the floors on muddy days. There were some good books in a case and a piano which was the especial property of May, and the only one "this side of town." The few simple pictures and the little articles of ornamentation, though unpretentious, indicated a refined taste. The whole showed the touches of May's leisure moments. This parlor, though little used, was not one of those sepulchral "best rooms" into which the sunshine of day or the sunshine of a laugh never penetrates. Everything the Bryces owned was intended to serve some useful purpose.

They had scarcely closed the parlor door when Tom remarked:

"A very pretty girl, that Miss Bryce."

"What, smitten already?" replied Wilson, eyeing his friend narrowly.

"Oh, no; I shan't poach on your preserves."

"Tom, I'm only a boarder in this house."

"Oh, I understand. It must be very nice sometimes to be a boarder."

"It *is* to be a boarder in this family."

The friends chatted until supper time, watching the glowing anthracite through the cherry-red mica doors of the big base-burner. They talked of New York and their acquaintances, of the fresh Englishman, who was withal a good fellow, of the "Old Commoner" and his sugar, of Chetta Ingledee, and Wilson did not fail to ask his friend about his sister Alice.

At the six o'clock supper, which Tom, in his ignorance called dinner, the table was bountifully spread with substantials and delicacies. It was such fare as only the country housewife can prepare. There was a chicken pot-pie, the sight of which would have rendered the inhabitants of a boarding-house frantic with anticipations of gastronomic delights. There were mashed potatoes and stewed parsnips and cold slaw. There was light delicious bread, which had a satisfying substance that was very unlike the airy production of the city baker, which approaches at times the ethereal nothingness of a dream. There were huge pies, apple and mince, with well-baked, tender crust and bounteous insides. The principal dishes were punctuated with smaller ones piled

high with pickles, spiced peaches, preserved pears, canned strawberries, and currant jelly. For drinkables there was coffee like nectar, milk and cider. The cream for the coffee and fruit was cream. It was ambitious to rise to the top of the vessel in a rich coat, and was not ashamed to stay there. Pickled pigs' feet, doughnuts and other dishes found a place wherever they could among the profusion of edibles.

It is the weakness of the farmer's wife to display all the resources of her cookery at once. Like an army reduced to great straits, she hazards all on a single charge, and tries to carry all by one great effort. She overwhelms with profusion. If she possesses, as she often does, a dozen kinds of butters, jellies and marmalades, she sets them all out at once, to the utter bewilderment of her guest and the confusion of her neighbor, who can set out only ten kinds. Hence about the only difference noticeable at next day's Sunday dinner was that the chicken was roasted and pumpkin and custard pies took the place of apple and mince, while delicious, flaky biscuits were a toothsome substitute for bread.

During the long, gloomy December Sunday Jacob Bryce talked to Norwell unceasingly, inside the house and out. The farmer was really an intelligent man, and was delighted to find some one beyond his own commonplace acquaintance with whom he could, as he expressed it, have "a good square talk." He showed Norwell the hogs, told him what they would weigh, and what he could get for them. He pointed out the pigs he intended to keep for breeding purposes. He descanted on the merits of his horses, and gave a history of the flea-bitten old gray mare who was the mother of several of them. All this might have been very tiresome had it not been interlarded with practical observations new and novel to Tom. Bryce's conversation departed materially from that usual on such occasions, which takes the form of a dialogue something after the following fashion:

"John, what'll you take for that there brindle cow?"

"Forty dollars! not a cent less of any man's money. That's a dog-on fine keow, Jones."

"Say, d'ye mind that old crumply-horned cow of ourn?"

"Le's see. The one with the stub tail?"

"Yes."

"Waal, that ole cow jist beats all creation. She's got so the women can't go nigh her. She chased the hull kit out 'o the barn yard last Monday mornin',—no, le 's see, it was

Chuseday mornin'. Bub had to stop plowin' to git her druv to the paster."

"Beef her! No keow o' mine can cut up any sich didos as that roun' me, I tell yeou."

"John, how d'ye keep your horses so slick?"

"Oats an' elbow grease, I guess."

"What's good for bots?"

"Got bots at your house?"

"Naw, but one o' Bill Simpson's horses died awful sud-dint with 'em yisterday."

"They're a purty skeery thing sometimes. We never had 'em." From the last remark it would seem doubtful whether bots were confined to the equine family or whether at times they might not attack their biped masters on skeery occasions.

"Bothered with rats? Durn em, they're eating us up body and breeches." And so the conversation goes on for a whole day if the visit lasts so long.

Although Mr. Bryce never allowed the valves of speech to get rusty his conversation was not flat. Nor did he have that exceedingly vulgar habit of trying to do all the talking, a habit not unknown, I am sorry to say, in good society. He asked Tom his opinion on many subjects of interest. At times he asked some questions which, had not Tom been previously cautioned by Wilson, he would have considered impertinent. But they were well meant. Tom was secretly hoping that the old man would get through sometime and allow him to cultivate the acquaintance of the daughter. But for this he was obliged to wait till a week day when Mr. Bryce was at work and Wilson at school.

CHAPTER XII.

SPELLIN' SCHOOL.

"What are your chief amusements, Miss Bryce?"

"We have very few, mostly singings, parties and spelling schools."

"I think those must all be very enjoyable."

"I don't care much about them, Mr. Norwell. It is just

the same thing over every time. They say and do about the same things. My greatest pleasure is reading. Mother says I read so much that I care for nothing else."

"That is an unfailing source of pleasure for some people, though I can't say I'm much of a reader. What do you like best?"

"Poetry and fiction."

"I cut the poetry."

"Oh, poetry is delightful, Mr. Norwell. How can you say that?"

"It's because I'm prosy, I guess."

"Mr. Norwell, I think you must be a great deal more clever than you admit. City people all are I suppose; I'm a country girl, but I do think country people are *so* dull. It must be very nice living in a city where all the people are well-informed and entertaining." Norwell opened his eyes rather wide at this, and replied:

"Miss Bryce, I think you over-estimate city people. They are not all witty and well-informed, and not all even agreeable."

"Of course I did not mean that they were all witty. We cannot *all* be that."

"Some of us city folks are stupid too."

"Well, perhaps—I don't know—I never thought so," replied May slowly, as if this were a painful revelation that produced a discord in her ideas of metropolitan society. She had formed those ideas chiefly on her estimate of the very few city people she had seen, and from notions picked out of books, and the society columns of the papers. It was hard to believe that the well-dressed, polite, city people were not the superior beings which her romantic imagination had pictured them. But here was a positive contradiction of her notions. If she were only quite sure he was not jesting, she would quietly admit the painful truth of his position. On the latter point she was undecided, and so made only a partial surrender.

"Mr. Norwell, I suppose *some* city people *are* dull."

"For your admission, Miss Bryce, I'll make another, that many country people are decidedly agreeable company." In her uncertainty what to say, May now said nothing at all.

This conversation occurred one afternoon before Wilson returned from his school, and while Mrs. Bryce was taking the first steps toward supper. Norwell had found his new

friends very interesting, and had rapidly advanced his acquaintance with them.

The first social event which Tom Norwell participated in was a spelling school. The "Spoon Creek" district challenged Wilson's school to a contest. A rivalry had existed between these districts from the days of the first settlers. It cropped out in matters literary, social, and at times religious. Each strove to outdo the other in whatever might be undertaken. Sometimes one was victorious, sometimes the other, for they were very evenly matched. These contests were usually carried on in a spirit of good humor except when religion got mixed up with them, then dogmatism sometimes got the better of common sense, among the elderly brethren and sisters. Bryce's district was shoutin' Methodist, Spoon Creek deep-water Baptist.

The much talked of contest was to take place on the Tuesday evening of the week before Christmas. The young folks had been in a high state of excitement for several weeks. The Analytical Speller was conned morning noon and night as it had never been perused before. Boys and girls even became absorbed in the excitement to the extent of abandoning for a time the more congenial sports of skating, sliding, popping corn and munching apples. Their heads might be seen in dangerous proximity to the evening lamp, as they hummed incessantly, getting the long columns by heart. One might easily have imagined them talking machines, specially constructed to pour forth in unceasing streams the fearfully and wonderfully constructed syllables of our senseless English orthography. They gave out to one another, as pronouncing was called in the local idiom, to test their proficiency. The old folks caught the contagion and told wonderful stories of feats accomplished in Webster or the "United States," "forty odd year ago" when spelling was a high art, and before its present lamentable decadence had set in.

It was generally conceded by the people of both districts, that Deacon Elijah Brown, of Quinnebago district, and Squire Hiram Dodge, of Four Corners district, should respectively give out and act as judge (umpire). The deacon belonged to the Congregational church and was consequently above the suspicion of bias in a contest between Baptist and Methodist. Squire Dodge, who hailed from the Buckeye State, had been Justice of the Peace for twenty years, and never had a decision reversed by a higher court. He was a member of no church.

He was consequently satisfactory to all, and at the same time a concession to the worldly element which flourished to a considerable degree in these parts.

It was further hoped that Judge Andrew Dickson might be induced to come out from town. The Judge, like many other titled dignitaries in the West, had never sat on the bench unless it was a carpenter's bench in his early days. He was an important-looking fat man, who carried a gold-headed cane and could squirt tobacco juice a little further than any other person in the county. He was a great scholar and served the community instead of a cyclopedia. Tap him anywhere and information would flow. Logarithms, philosophy, history, poetry and orthography trickled indifferently from the same spigot. True, his knowledge was not very well classified, and it usually took some time to get at just what was wanted. But a considerable dumping around of wares in his mental storehouse, and much preliminary expectoration usually brought forth an opinion more or less explicit. His decisions were seldom questioned. In a community of farmers and small tradesmen, erudite men are rare enough to be valuable, besides what is the use of weakening public confidence and running down home institutions? The only fear was that Judge Dickson might not honor this occasion with his presence. He often declined, and then allowed himself to be persuaded into accepting. It was so in this case, and as a result his services were thereby greatly enhanced in public estimation.

On the eventful evening Bryce's big sled was full to overflowing with young folks going to the "spellin' school." The bottom of the sled was full of clean oat straw, and into this squeezed the youngsters until the boards creaked every time they breathed. Tom Norwell was very careful to seat himself beside May Bryce. In the jostle and chaffing and noise he clung as closely to her side as the prevailing confusion permitted. The hired man drove. Mr. Bryce "guessed he was about done with that sort o' thing," so he and Mrs. Bryce staid at home. Several other sleds took the remainder of the Bryce district, and away they sped at a rattling pace, over the crisp snow, under a glorious moon, between miles of wire or two-plank fence, past farmhouses, up gentle slopes, down again with a swoop, over wooden bridges, rousing dogs in basso, dogs in tenor, dogs in piping staccato, dogs with a lazy, careless bark, dogs with a sharp, vicious bark, and dogs

in the far away distance whose answer seemed only an echo. On they speed, singing merrily snatches of songs in all kinds of time and no kind of tune, arousing the people as they pass, whose faces appear at the ruddy windows; on! on! over the boundless prairie, between the interminable fences, with snow flying in their faces, and overhead the clear full moon and myriads of twinkling stars set in a silvery sky. Such is a genuine country sleighride, compared with which the city affair in a cramped ten to twenty dollar a night turn out is a miserable delusion.

Spoon Creek schoolhouse was, as Deacon Brown expressed it, "chuck full." There was this winter a sudden revival in spelling schools which had of late years somewhat languished for the more fashionable amusements found in evening parties and dancing.

"I calkilate there hasn't been sich a crowd in this house sence the war," remarked the Deacon to Squire Dodge.

"I reckon not. Who do you reckon will have to give out, Deacon?"

"Judge Dickson's the man for that." Now in making this reply the deacon knew perfectly well that another sphere of usefulness was allotted to the Judge, and that he himself was by general consent to be nominated for the position named.

"I 'spose the Judge will be late if he comes at all, so I reckon we'll have to pick somebody else." This conversation took place while they were thawing their shins in front of the huge soft-coal stove in the center of the room, which raged like an incipient volcano.

The room was now full of shock-headed cubs of boys in jeans and cowhide boots, with woolen scarfs around their necks. The young men were more pretentiously dressed, some of them even in tailor-made well-fitting suits, though their efforts at style somehow were not a complete success. They acted too much like the painfully conscious man who appears for the first time in a bran new suit of clothes. However, if the young men were satisfied, and better still, the girls, that was quite sufficient. One ambitious youth who aspired to play the beau possessed a profusion of red hair. He wore a flaming red silk necktie and a pair of yellow kid gloves (the only pair present) with black corded seams in the backs. The effect was certainly unique. There were girls of all sizes, stout girls, slim girls, straight girls, stooping

girls, plain girls and handsome girls. One trait they all possessed in common, an uncontrollable tendency to giggle. Some of the older young ladies, however, succeeded measurably in suppressing undue laughter. There were also many of the younger married people present, and a sprinkling of old folks. Soon after the close of the conversation alluded to between Deacon Brown and Squire Dodge, as above quoted, the Squire rose and cleared his throat. The talking now subsided or was carried on in whispers, and the Squire began:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:—It's gittin' nigh onto eight o'clock." Nobody disputed this announcement, and he continued after a pause with deliberation and great stress on his words. "I reckon this is goin' to be the biggest spellin' school we ever had in these parts. It's goin' to be a squar stand up and knock down in three rounds, an' I 'spose it's goin' to take considerble time. In my opinion we ort to begin tolable early. So I will nominate Deacon Brown to give out. If there is no objection the Deacon is considered elected."

Deacon Brown went forward to the teacher's desk. He was a tall, stooping, thin Yankee, with a marked nasal twang. Like Judge Dickson he had acquired a habit of spitting continually on exciting occasions, such as the present. Unlike the Judge, he had nothing to spit, for he did not chew tobacco. With a nervous attempt to expectorate, which being the first, was partially successful, the Deacon began:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:—I think praps you might 'a got a more competent person to fill this position than I be, for it's a ticklish place to be in on such occasions as this, an' takes ruther particlar work."

The Deacon made it much more ticklish by his disagreeable articulation, which often puzzled the speller and left him in a fog as to what the word might be. But he was not aware of any such infirmity. His remarks were merely introductory, and the same he had made at every spelling where he had presided for the last twenty years. After another superannuated attempt to spit he proceeded:

"I agree, however, with Squire Dodge. It's nigh onto eight o'clock. (No dissent.) I kalkilate we'd better toss up for sides." Just then Judge Dickson entered, preceded by a suppressed buzz of mingled excitement and satisfaction. "Come right up in front, Judge. Take the master's seat."

"I was a gittin' mighty oneasy. I thought you mightn't

be comin'," remarked Squire Dodge by way of salutation, in an undertone that could be heard all over the house.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," continued Deacon Brown, "if nobody objects I guess we'd better have the Judge to sit as a sort of court of appeal to aid the reg'lar judge to pass on knotty pints."

As the Judge had been sent for with this very purpose in view, and as everybody knew it perfectly well, there was no objection. Neither was there any approval. It is only city people who have acquired the absurd and meaningless habit of applauding on every possible occasion. The Deacon continued: "I kalkilate we are now ready to git right down to business; the teachers will toss up for sides."

The tossing up was for the purpose of allowing the opposite sides a chance to choose from those present who belonged to neither district. It was done in this wise. One of the teachers grasped the handle of the school broom with his right hand and the other grasped it just above and touching the hand of the first. The one who had the last hold at the top of the handle tossed the broom into the air for the other to catch at random. Two upper holds out of three gave the right of first choice, which fell to Wilson. Wilson, feeling confident of his success any way, chose Tom Norwell partly as a joke and partly because he knew Tom to be a pretty good scholar and a correct speller. Here Deacon Brown confided to Squire Dodge, in one of those wheezy whispers which, intended to be inaudible, can be heard more easily than the individual's ordinary tone of voice, "I kalkilate that New York chap is some on the spell when he tries." It was in vain Tom asked to be excused. Squire Dodge said such a thing couldn't be thought on, and the authority in the person of Judge Dickson said such a thing was without precedent, and little short of a violation of the common law.

A row of seats had been placed around the room, beginning with the teacher's desk, running down the side aisles, and ending at the door on the opposite side of the house. On these the contestants took their places, the teachers at the head. The contest was to be: First, "climbers"; second, spelling down; third, a bout at defining lists of words which both schools had studied in their readers. These climbers were the two best spellers, who went each to the foot of his opponent's side. Whenever a word was missed the climber went above all the persons missing, unless some one on that

side was fortunate enough to spell the word before it reached the climber, or unless the climber himself was unlucky enough to miss, in which case the correct speller "trapped" him.

The contest grew animated as the grotesque and senseless combinations of English orthography fell from the lips of lisping maidens in almost inaudible tones (the same who could laugh so loud), and shock-headed boys who blunted all their vowels. A very few of the poorest spellers dropped before the climbers at the first round, but the majority held out bravely. There was little guessing. It was a brilliant triumph of mnemonics. At length, to Wilson's great dismay, *reveille* slaughtered nearly his whole line. There were frequent calls to have it "pronounced over again." This was clearly against the rules, for Deacon Brown had announced before beginning that he should give out words but twice at most, and each speller should have but one trial. He stuck on reveille and held a whispered consultation with Judge Dickson as to its proper pronunciation. Then drawing a long breath, and ejaculating two little spits, he fired the deadly missile at the unsuspecting assembly. The effect was electrical. A suppressed "what" of surprise ran around the circle. The boy whose turn it was had been posing with his feet on the seat in front of him. In his confusion he dropped them with a great noise to the floor, and the consequent publicity embarrassed him. He grew red in the face and stammered "Dunno the word." Deacon Brown held another consultation with Squire Dodge and Judge Dickson, in which they came to the astounding conclusion that it was a furrin' word.

"Naow, bein' a furrin word, I kalkilate it ought to be pronounced accordin' to furrin idees. What dew yeou say, Squire Dodge?" This public appeal was merely formal, to give the Squire a chance to express himself.

"I'm not very well up onto furrin words, Deacon, but I guess we ort to have the furrin' way about as nigh as you can tech it." Judge Dickson felt that here was a chance to display profound learning, and give a decision that was a decision. As a preliminary he took the cud of tobacco from his mouth and prepared to expectorate. He blew a column of tobacco juice, shaped like a miniature water spout, directly toward the stove. It fell a little short of the mark, but left a broad trail on the floor shaped like the tail of a comet. With due deliberation he began:

"P'r'aps we'd better have the French of it. French is

gettin' to be so common nowadays that we might as well take to it first as last, I guess."

Deacon Brown now prepared to give "the French of it, as nigh as he could tech it." A Frenchman would have stood aghast at the result. It might have been a Welch adjective, a three-story German oath, or the echo of a superannuated war whoop. Nobody dared attempt it. Now it so happened that in the Bryce district the pupils had been taught to pronounce the word rev-a-lee', while the Spoon Creekers had got the "French of it" re-vale'-yea. As a consequence Wilson's school were completely puzzled, while their opponents were secretly and anxiously expectant, for some of them had somehow recognized the mangled remains of the word, perhaps from Deacon Brown's facial contortions.

The frightened boy whose turn it was spelled "raillery;" the next one "shillalah." Then there was a storm of protest "that it wasn't fair; nobody knew the word." After considerable discussion it was finally agreed that the deacon should pronounce the word again. This time he mentally resolved to make it clear, and thought a judicious combination of the English and French versions might improve matters. But, unluckily, he stuck in the middle of it, and could get neither backward nor forward, finally delivering himself of something about as intelligible as the words of Italian opera to an English audience. With his inimitable nasal twang the word might have passed for a section of a Chinese prayer. He slowly repeated it without a particle of accent, jerking each syllable off in separate morsels—*ruv-ale-yuh*.

Everybody passed unanimously till it came to the turn of the Spoon Creek climber, who correctly spelled and pronounced reveille. At one fell swoop he laid low all his opponents but Tom and Wilson. There was a storm of protest, but in vain. Squire Dodge decided that the deacon's pronunciation "must 'a bin accordin' to grammar 'r'else that climber wouldn't 'a snapped it up like that," and Judge Dickson, as final court of appeals, clinched the decision. The law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed.

Tom and Wilson in dismay determined to fight for it, and if possible save their side from ignominious defeat. Round and round went the words until the interest grew intense, as evinced by the quietness prevailing. First the whispering subsided into a low hum, then it stopped, then feet ceased to shuffle on the floor, and at last a dead silence prevailed. The

excitement incident to an old-fashioned spelling school finally culminates, with a close contest, in a tension such as is exhibited at a horse race or at a theater where a fashionable audience is listening to the thrilling crisis in some great tragedy. The fastidious critic or the languid devotee of dilettante literature may find nothing perchance in a spelling school of interest or worthy of mention. To such I will say that the spelling school is as distinctively American as the pumpkin pie or Yankee Doodle, and as this book deals with American life, the author deems no apology necessary for introducing the spelling school.

Round and round went the words, but the Bryce district climber had not succeeded in "trapping" a single Spoon Creeker. He was held stubbornly at bay by a ruddy-cheeked boy in a blue flannel shirt without any collar. This boy was a prodigy in spelling, and his being placed at the lower end of the line was a most ingenious ruse to discourage the enemy. Suddenly Tom Norwell, who was really warmed to the contest, fell on *bilious*, into which he projected two l's in a moment of over-confidence. Instantly the tension was removed and a laugh followed, which Squire Dodge promptly suppressed by stamping his big foot on the floor and remarking, "I 'low we ort to have better order." Wilson's school was defeated. They won on the "stand up and spell down" trial, but lost the defining contest, and the victory was adjudged to the triumphant Spoon Creekers. The spelling adjourned amidst shouts, laughter, and much good-natured bantering.

Suddenly the young folks are divided without any apparent cause into two distinct groups. The girls in one corner of the room, with much chattering and giggling, don their bonnets and shawls, while the boys all file out of the house. Here they form in two lines at either side of the door and appear to be in an expectant attitude. Inside the girls giggle incessantly, and such expressions as "You go first, Tillie." "No, *you* go first, Jule," could be heard. At last, with much adjusting of wraps and giggling, the girls start for the door to run the gauntlet awaiting them.

The irrepressible small boy is outside the lines taking observations. As the maidens trip lightly over the threshold the gallant beaux (the more experienced nearest the door as the critical position) single out the damsels of their choice and inquire, rather nervously, "May I see you home?" If

the answer is favorable the cavalier thrusts out an arm awkwardly at right angles, and the procession moves at once, amid the cheers of the vigilant small boy. If a negative is received, does the young man vanish into nonentity? Not at all, if he have a modicum of what is known in the local vernacular as brass. He just keeps on asking till he does find a girl who is ready to lisp out "Yes." This is no lottery, for there is a prize for every one, and perseverance coupled with the happy faculty of not being too particular, is sure to win. The dainty damsels delight in saying "No" a few times, but they are all the time anxiously watching the length of the line and are sure to be suited before reaching it. There is no case in the traditions where a young man owning a sleigh has been refused.

Away they went homeward again under the twinkling stars. The crisp snow as it flew before the horses' feet, over the unbroken crust at the roadside, had a clear, musical ring, like the faintest low twang of a stringed instrument. The spirits of the party were at the very highest pitch. They sang, they jested, they laughed as they sped away like the wind. The sled was crowded to its utmost capacity, and somehow Tom Norwell's arm slid gently around May Bryce's waist. Perhaps this was to economize space, perhaps a precaution against accident. She chatted away apparently oblivious to the fact. She was fascinated, thrilled, delighted with the superior manners of this well-bred stranger. Her refined and romantic nature was stirred as it never had been before. But she did not seem to recognize the fact that her beau had an arm at all, that is to say, she took no cognizance of its whereabouts. Like oblivion prevailed in other cases.

May told the hired man "to let the horses out." He let them out with the intention of passing a sled just ahead. He turned his team from the beaten path, and with a crack of the whip put them on a full run. The entire lane was drifted full of snow, and smooth as a floor, concealing all hollows or inequalities. Unluckily he turned out just as they were passing over a low wooden bridge or culvert which was concealed by the drifts. There was a sudden lurch of the sled, a chorus of screams, flying forms, tangled wraps, and the whole party were floundering in three or four feet of snow. Fortunately nobody was hurt, and nothing broken. The party ahead, with roars of laughter at the expense of the wrecked crew, caught the horses, and, in a few minutes after

much scrambling, shaking of garments, and searching for lost articles, they were all safely started again.

After proceeding some distance they approached another bridge, and a young man sang out:

"Say girls, are you goin' to pay forfeits?" Several laughed, and one damsel said saucily, "Not much; wouldn't you like to, though?" Tom Norwell had heard of the ancient custom by virtue of which the gay gallant might snatch a kiss from his fair partner while crossing a bridge. He, furthermore, had the impression that country people were very free and easy in their manners. If there was any fun going he mentally resolved to have his share. Leaning over the shoulder of his neighbor in front, he inquired in a whisper if the forfeit were to be exacted. That young gentleman jocularly replied, "I will if you will," and Tom answered, "All right." Suddenly they entered the darkness of a covered wooden bridge, and Tom adroitly planted a kiss on the cherry lips of the unsuspecting May. His companion in front attempted to follow suit, but the saucy damsel was too quick to be caught on the fly, and a little struggle ensued. Two or three other young men made similar attempts, but woman would not be woman if she yielded without a contest. The sled emerged from the bridge, and a chorus of female voices cried, "Not smart enough, eh," and laughed in silvery peals that echoed over the solemn waste of snow. May, who was so neatly caught, blushed crimson, but made no reply to the good-natured chaff at her expense.

Tom felt heartily ashamed of himself. He was a thief, caught in the act and exposed to the eye of a virtuous public. He felt that he had heartlessly imposed on a helpless girl. But the remembrance of that delicious first kiss lingered long after all sense of culpability disappeared. First impressions thrill and penetrate us till they become a part of ourselves, as later ones never can. The sunshine quickens the ripening peach. But when rare nectar swells the luscious fruit the golden beams become only a dull stream of yellow light. The peach has drunk the wine of life, and sunshine now brings only surfeit.

Norwell was obliged to return to New York soon. He had had a capital visit. He had seen a little of real country life and had never enjoyed himself so well. He returned, bearing pleasant memories, one of which was the image of a tender, blue-eyed, fair-haired girl. Was there room in his

heart for it beside that of the strong-willed girl of Fifth avenue? A man's heart may hold a thousand noble impulses. but it can never hold two women at once.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HACKETTS.

Mr. Norwell had once had in his employ at the factory a foreman by the name of Hackett. This man had a family, consisting of his wife, a daughter Mary and a son John. With him lived a maiden sister, Aunt Rhoda Hackett. Hackett found it hard work to support such a family on his moderate salary. His wife was an invalid, and the boy a sickly hunchback. The little fellow's deformity was not so bad as most of the kind, and he strove to conceal it as far as possible by dress and bearing, but nature had been very miserly in her gifts to him. From his stunted appearance he was always known by the name of "little Hackett." His pale, sickly looks betrayed chronic ill-health, resulting from his spinal trouble and a nervous disorder which affected the functions of his heart somewhat.

By dint of much scrimping and saving, Hackett had accumulated one thousand dollars which Mr. Norwell kept paying him interest. Hacket was solicitous that his crippled son and daughter should not be left penniless to the scanty charity of a selfish world, doomed to the unceasing struggle for existence incident to the life of the very poor. Mrs. Hackett's long expected death came as a matter of course, and Hackett died a few years later when Mary was thirteen, and "Little Hackett" eleven. He bequeathed the whole of his little property to his children, naming Mr. Norwell executor. Aunt Rhoda continued to be their natural guardian, as she had for years been really a mother to them.

Little Hackett was now twenty-one, though in appearance still a boy. His somewhat better health allowed him to work with his sister in a bookbindery where she had for some years been employed. Mr. Norwell, by allowing them a generous interest, more than the money would really bring elsewhere, had, besides the small outlays made from time to

time for the children, accumulated for them in all two thousand dollars. He had retained Mary's money after her majority, but now informed the Hackett children that they would come into possession of one thousand dollars apiece. They were naturally anxious to invest their little money where it would be absolutely secure. Aunt Rhoda, who was reared in the country, thought "a bit of land" the surest possession in this world. But a bit of land was out of the question in New York City, with their means. They naturally wished Mr. Norwell to advise them.

The Hacketts lived on the East Side in a street a little further up town, a little cleaner, and a little, very little better in every respect than the plebeian neighborhood of the Malleys. There was less brawling, less noise at night, and less filth than in the latter locality. The ugly brick tenement-house in which they lived, had nothing attractive about it to any one accustomed to the decencies and common comforts of life. But the poor are grateful for even a shelter. Added to this plenty to eat, plenty to wear, and a warm fire, and they anticipate a taste of heaven. You, perhaps reader, though not a millionaire, may think the possession of only these things not living at all. Your opinion then is only another illustration of the old saying that one-half the world does not know how the other half lives.

It is said of Marie Antoinette, the unfortunate queen of France, on whom was poured the accumulated wrath of centuries, that she asked, when told that the people clamored for bread, "Why don't the poor things eat cake?" In this land of boasted intelligence there are millions of people as ignorant of the tendencies of our national policy as was this useless piece of royalty, concerning the real condition of her miserable subjects. Our public domain which we thought inexhaustible has well-nigh disappeared, granted to great corporations and land thieves of various degrees. We have encouraged railways with land grants until they are virtually our masters. They buy our officeholders with what they stole from the people. We have boasted of our natural resources, and "boomed" our natural advantages until Europe is deluging us with paupers and criminals.

Our patent laws, originally intended to protect the inventor, are now little better than a means of allowing conscienceless capitalists to rob the people. When four or five sewing-machine monopolies can wring from the women of the coun-

try one hundred millions in twenty years; when four or five railway kings can steal one hundred and sixty millions in twenty years; when an oil company can pile fabulous millions on millions in ten years; when a Wall-street pirate can steal from the American people one hundred millions in twenty years by wrecking railroads, seizing telegraphs, and endangering the business interests of the country; when three or four great coal monopolies can own the fuel of a continent, and charge extortionate prices for it; when the rich daily grow enormously rich, and the poor daily grow poorer; when all these things can occur, under the sanction of law, in a great republic, is it not time to stop and think? Having reflected, is it not time to act before our slavery is complete and irremediable?

What must we do? Join the ranks of the communist? No! Communism is a monster too vile to be tolerated for an instant. It is the dangerous weapon of the reckless, the improvident, the criminal. What then? Purify politics. Elect honest men, pledged to honest measures. If they betray their trust set them such an example as will make official corruption, bribery, and dishonesty a crime, sure to meet a swift, certain, and righteous retribution. Let public opinion place bribery on a par with horse stealing. Let us at all hazards stay this tide of corruption. Otherwise the dreadful horrors of the French Revolution may be repeated on American soil during the twentieth century.

The crazy old brick building in which the Hacketts lived was a regular human hive. It had nothing suggestive of home to a person who had been brought up on a farm where the nearest neighbor lives half a mile distant. It was a home for the Hacketts, for they had known no other nearly all the lives of the brother and sister. The Hacketts were probably the very poorest tenants in the building, which, instead of being a calamity as may appear at first sight, was a blessing, since they had very good neighbors. Among such people there is little or none of the jealousy existing among the rich on the subject of wealth which leads at times to so much display and senseless rivalry. None of them had means sufficient to justify them in putting on airs. In this building no family had less than two rooms, a fortunate contrast with those places not infrequent in the metropolis where a family of five or six persons cook, eat, live, and sleep in a single room of moderate dimensions.*

*See Note 4.—The Poor of New York.

The two rooms occupied by the Hacketts were at the back of the third floor. The back yards here gave a space of at least sixty feet between the rear of their house and the rear of the building across the alley. In this locality such a vista may justly be termed magnificent, and the tenant who would complain of such a stretch of scenery was indeed unreasonable. The forenoon sun shone full into their rear room. This was a blessing of which the enterprising landlord had not been able to devise means to deprive them, although he made the most of it by increasing the rent, because of the fine light which made the apartments, he argued, fully equal to a front suite of rooms.

The carpet on the floor was in places very threadbare, though carefully darned by Aunt Rhoda. The chairs were old and growing rickety. There was a geranium and a vine in the window, and a very active canary in a cage. The little square stove which served both for cooking and heating purposes was carefully polished. In spite of the apparent poverty, this little room looked positively cosy. Mr. Norwell often came to see and advise his wards, and frequently Tom dropped in to have a chat with Aunt Rhoda and Mary, who had grown into a very good looking young woman. On the present occasion as they were seated by a lamp, about half-past seven o'clock in the evening, there was a knock at the door. Mary, laying down some sewing, remarked to her brother, who was reading:

"That's Tom Norwell."

"Well, if I don't believe it is," exclaimed Aunt Rhoda. Mary opened the door, and Tom's cheery voice was heard in the passage. His voice like his nature, was full of melody. There was in it an inspiration of joy which, combined with his cheerful countenance, carried gladness with them. No germ of discontent existed in his nature. His presence for the time subdued it in others. Who could really be selfish enough to feel blue while catching a spirit of genial humor from this good natured specimen of robust mental and physical manhood? Yet he was not frivolous. He possessed the rare faculty of making, when he chose, his cordiality a part of becoming dignity. Unconsciously he banished reserve, without sacrificing the prestige of his own attractive personality. His manners were frank, cordial and winning; when this rare gift is combined with small moral faculties, the possessor may become a very dangerous person. Nature does for a rascal

of this sort gratuitously, and with apparent honesty of purpose, what a less gifted rogue is obliged to accomplish by artful methods. But Tom Norwell had no thought of employing wrongly, the great power which like a magnet, drew others toward him. It would have been of vast utility to Horace Roker. Tom dropped into an old-fashioned rocking chair which was always allotted to him. Mary resumed her sewing, now and then casting a friendly glance toward their visitor.

"Laws 'a me, Mr. Tom, you haven't been to see us for a long time. Are you forgettin' old friends? But then of course you have more places to go than poor folks have."

"Now, Aunt Rhoda, that isn't fair. I haven't forgotten you at all. I'll leave it to Mary if I have, eh, Mary?"

"I'm sure you would never forget old friends," said Mary, as a smile lighted up her countenance, and a faint glow passed over her cheeks. Mary Hackett had a pleasing face with regular outlines. It had, perhaps, too little color for healthy beauty, but with the adjuncts of fine dress, and the polish of good society, she might have passed for a fine-looking woman. As it was, she, although still young, showed traces of care, which plainly indicated the canker of hard work and poverty. Yet she had an intelligent, spiritual look, which showed her to be in thought and feeling, far above most of her fellow workmen in the great bookbindery.

"There, Aunt Rhoda, you'll have to submit gracefully. If further proof is wanted I'll bring up John."

"Oh, the children will stand up for you, and say anything you want 'em too, es far es that's concerned."

"Of course Mr. Tom can't be runnin' to see us every few days," said Little Hackett. "He has lots o' places to go."

"There, do you give in now? Besides, Aunt, I've been out West lately."

"I want to know," said Aunt Rhoda. The expression "I want to know" was one of frequent use with Aunt Rhoda. It did not express any special desire for information, but was merely a stock phrase, by means of which she extended her store of ideas, over more space to keep company with her colloquial ambition. Stock phrases are the ballast of speech. In themselves they are of no value, but they help to trim the bark.

"Oh yes, took a flying trip to Illinois," said Tom.

"Tell us all about it," said Little Hackett, who was now

interested. He had always had a longing for travel, but knew the utter impossibility of ever realizing that longing, with his poor health and small means.

"That would take too long, Johnnie. But I'll tell you one thing. The people out there beat all creation for getting around lively."

"I want to know." Strangers hearing this peculiar Yankee idiom for the first time, have been known to go into the most minute and tedious details, while they marveled inwardly at the questioner's apparently unappeasable desire for information. Tom knew better. He continued, with emphasis:

"Why Aunt Rhoda, I tell you what, the fresh milk and butter, the big apple pies, the real sausages, and the pretty girls just make my mouth water to think of them."

"Why, Mr. Thomas," exclaimed Mary. The Hacketts had been so frequently at Mr. Norwell's place of business, where Tom was called "Mr. Tom," in contradistinction of his father, who was only "Mr. Norwell," or "Mr. T. M." as the case might be, that they insensibly adopted the same style of address. Aunt Rhoda replied:

"Land sakes, Mr. Tom, I knew all that before you was born. Don't I know that the keows give real milk in the country, and that sassige is made of pork? As fur the girls —well they *was* girls in them days, but nowadays they're good fur nothing but to put on airs. I don't care a snap for 'em."

"Probably you liked their brothers better in those days, Aunt Rhoda."

"I guess there ain't many sech likely young men nowadays either."

Poor old Aunt Rhoda's memory with a little tremor went back to one likely young man, the pride of their neighborhood, whose name had been linked with hers forty years ago. He was accidentally drowned, and her heart was buried with him. For years after that the world for her was only a place in which to eat, sleep, perform daily duties, and die. There was a pause, in which the silence was broken only by the ticking of the old wooden clock. All present knew her story and divined her thoughts. Presently she added:

"City life isn't livin'. A body never gets a fresh bite or a clean thing."

"Now, Aunt Rhoda, don't you go back on the city," said Tom.

"Folks keep rushin' here by the thousand to drudge out their days. They'd a heap better go a thousand miles the other way."

"Somebody must live in cities," said Mary.

"It must be awful lonesome in the country a mile from anywhere," added Little Hackett. "But I shouldn't mind that if I could see a new place every day."

"Everything is right at hand in the city," said Tom. "You don't have to wait for anything. If we want strawberries we don't have to wait till they grow. We just send out and buy them."

Norwell was so used to money that he never thought of admitting its non-existence for some people. He only thought of the non-existence of strawberries in the country out of season. It is very easy for the millionaire to feast on strawberries at two or three dollars per quart in January, or ruin his health with ice all summer. Things for him are very handy. For the poor the chief things handy are privation, toil and death. God made this world and its good things for all alike, black or white, strong or weak. But a great majority never come into their inheritance, either through their own improvidence or the insatiable rapacity of those who already have much more than they can possibly use. The world has steadily progressed until physical rapine is a thing of the past. When the rape of the penny has ceased, and not till then, will men be free and equal. In the course of the evening the Hacketts asked Tom Norwell's advice as to the investment of their little legacy. Tom advised Continental & Pacific stock. It was sure to go much higher, and was a good thing to sell or keep. His father was into it very heavily, and that was an evidence of what they thought of the stock.

"If I had only a few thousands of my own I could go into Wall street and make a fortune in a month."

Little Hackett took his hat and walked a distance down street with Tom to talk the matter over further. They had not gone far when they met a woman carrying a large heavy basket. To let them pass on the narrow sidewalk she stepped aside, but not observing her whereabouts tumbled down the steps leading to a basement. Her cries indicated at once that she was seriously injured. Tom sprang down the steps to her assistance, while Hackett called to a man who was passing for help. This man proved to be an old acquaintance of the Hacketts. The three managed to carry the woman, who

had several very severe bruises, up the steps to her own lodgings, which were near.

While they were waiting the coming of a physician who had been sent for, Hackett introduced his friend Wright, and the talk about the Continental & Pacific was resumed. Tom was enthusiastic on the subject, and as a result Wright expressed a desire to invest a little money which he had saved. Tom, handing him his card, said that as a personal favor to a friend of the Hacketts, he could get him a thousand or two any time.

It happened that Horace Roker, who was out taking an evening stroll, passed down the other side of the narrow street and recognized Tom Norwell, unknown to the latter. What the thoughts of that gentleman were it is not our province to determine. Possibly he was mentally figuring as a great stock operator in Wall street. Possibly he was indulging his fancy with the picture of a dark-eyed handsome wife, the daughter of a man whose name was on every tongue. If so, the sudden appearance of Tom Norwell must have greatly marred the effect of the picture. Roker stepped hastily to the next crossing, and whistled for a newsboy as if to buy an evening paper. A dirty, ragged gamin came spattering across the street, regardless of the muddy gutters, in breathless haste. It was our old friend Quill Malley.

"Which 'll yer have? Telergram er—"

"I want no paper. Do you wish to earn a dollar?

"Yes sir."

"I'll give you a dollar if you will follow that tall man yonder and see if he stops anywhere down town. Keep your eye on him. Then you can call to-morrow morning about half-past seven at that address, and get another dollar. Mind, you are delivering papers too when you call." As Roker said this he gave a frightful scowl and drew his scalp forward threateningly.

"Wot was I doin'?" exclaimed Quill in surprise, as he shrank back like one half expecting a blow.

"No talking back. Stir yourself," and Roker slipped a dollar into Quill's hand, together with a card on which he had written the street and number of his fashionable lodgings. Quill was off like a shot. Roker watched him round the corner, then leisurely resumed his stroll.

Suddenly his revery was interrupted by the reappearance of Quill before him on the sidewalk. A look of disgust was on the boy's face.

"Hyur, Mister, take back yer dollar."

"Why didn't you do my errand as I told you?" asked Roker with a menacing scowl, as his thin lips worked a little with suppressed anger.

"Please sir, I did. I knowed that feller, an' I don't care about makin' a dollar watchin' him."

"What! You know him? Don't lie to me, you little scamp," and he made a move as if to strike Quill, who he saw was a thorough coward. Quill judiciously backed off a little distance before replying, and then said doggedly:

"Tell yer I do. He knows a friend o' mine."

"Does he?" said Roker, with a sneer.

"Yes, me'n Pipe goes to Sunday school, an' Mr. Norwell knows our teacher."

"Who is your friend Pipe?"

"*Friend!* He's no friend. He's my brother. I'm twins 'n so's he."

"Ah, indeed! And you're not lying to me?" asked Roker, with another very uncomfortable flourish of his cane. Quill shrank clear back against the wall, and remonstrated against this insinuation that he was lying. When he remembered his numerous failings in this particular, he thought it very hard that genuine truth, told too at the expense of a dollar, should be discredited. This was small inducement to veracity.

"Deed, Sir, I'm tellin' the truth, as I never hope to draw another livin' breath."

"Do you know what I'd do to you if you lied to me?" And Roker stepped forward a little while Quill shrank closer to the wall.

"I 'spose you'd cane me within an inch o' my life." Quill had often heard his mother threaten this dire punishment, which she had never yet inflicted. Here was a man whom he believed only too willing to do it from the very pleasure to be derived from the exercise.

"Young man, you've guessed it exactly. What else do you think I might do?"

"I guess you'd cut a feller an' never have nothin' more to do with him."

"Worse than that," said Roker, with his cynical smile. Quill now began to feel that if there was anything worse in store than a vigorous caning, he preferred to be rid of such disagreable company. He would have cut and run at once, only he really believed the sinister, scowling man with the

movable scalp to be capable of overtaking him and caning him on the public street. He had heard of such things happening to *men*, and he was only a boy. Here was a man who could do it, he believed. Quill dropped the dollar on the sidewalk.

"Please, mister, take yer money an' leave me go."

"I'll tell you what I'd do," said Roker, dropping his voice and assuming a manner most distressingly confidential. "I'd just have you sent up for six months. I'm a friend of the Chief of Police." Now Quill was thoroughly terrified. He knew by experience what a police court was. A caning would no doubt be very disagreeable, but it was soon over. Six months was next to eternity to him.

"Say, mister, please don't be hard on a kid. Wot's the use? I didn't ask fur yer money. There it is. Take it, and leave me go home."

"What's your name?"

"Quill Malley."

"Where do you live?"

"Eighty-six Cinnamon Street."

"And you're not lying?" This was accompanied by another slight movement, as if about to pounce on his victim.

"I hope I may die in my tracks if I am."

"Now, Quill, you may keep that dollar, and I shall not ask you to follow Tom Norwell this time. Only keep your eye open, and if you see him down town notice where he stops and who is with him. You can find me at the address on that card. Don't forget the number, and don't forget you are delivering papers when you call. I guess you'll not forget, will you?"

"No, sir, I spect I'll not," and, finding himself free, Quill darted round the corner, immensely relieved.

CHAPTER XIV.

MISS HARRIE SNICKER ORGANIZES A PICNIC WHICH IS BY NO MEANS "COMMON."

The brilliant season has ended in the metropolis of the Western Continent. The long succession of balls, receptions, dinners, theater parties, opera, and all the innumerable lesser devices of the gay and fashionable to kill time, is at last ended, and the exhausted devotees of society are taking a breathing spell before renewing their diversions at the swell summer resorts.

Miss Harrie Snicker had planned a quiet picnic up the Hudson for one of the unusually pleasant June days. Miss Ingledee was to assist in the arrangements, including suggestions as to the persons to be invited. Garmand stood at the very head of the list. Miss Harrie had improved every possible opportunity of cultivating his acquaintance, for she argued that an Englishman who was distantly related, by courtesy or otherwise, to a live lord was next best thing, provided one could not get the lord himself. Garmand had spent the winter industriously studying this delightfully primitive country in the rustic localities of fashionable New York. As the heads of these people were usually filled with nothing but society doings, he still had something to learn about America, particularly the wild tribes of Indiana, Illinois and other savage regions of the West. Tom Norwell, as a matter of course, was a necessity on such an occasion. Mr. Bradley, the young gentleman who so gallantly rescued Harrie from the dangers of being run over in the street, was also to be invited. Harrie suggested that he would be so handy when the lemonade was to be made.

That young man had been pursuing his one great object in life under difficulties. His object, I will repeat, was to discover how nearly a young man may transform himself intellectually into the missing link of Darwinism, without losing his identity as a man. The transformation was to be accom-

plished by means of ultra fashionable dress, ultra fashionable manners, insipid associations and systematic snubbing of any persons who chanced to possess common sense. After the disaster alluded to heretofore he was, for a time, under a cloud. He, like many unfortunate young ladies, had nothing to wear, and his tailor was a stony-hearted wretch who required a heavy deposit on orders and the balance before the goods left the shop. On learning of the accident Snicker, Senior, had inclosed a check for one hundred dollars to Bradley, accompanied by a brief note regretting that the young man was not an acquaintance of the family so that he might call and receive their thanks personally.

Although Bradley had met Miss Snicker on several occasions, and had called on her two or three times, it seemed that the practical father did not consider him an acquaintance. According to the elder Snicker's ideas, acquaintance was a very substantial sort of entity that required for its development something more tangible than merely meeting a few times, making a few calls, and bowing on the street. In his mind, acquaintance was for some reason indissolubly associated with a bank account. In a rage Bradley returned the check without a line of comment. He negotiated a loan from a friend. The society young man of this class is a wonderful financier. He is a veritable John Law in the matter of floating paper, and is forever negotiating a loan, putting up as collateral his expectations of a remittance next week. Bradley's loan with ten days to run was successfully put on the market (his friend), and he was soon arrayed in suitable attire, and ready to devote himself to the purpose of his life. That he never redeemed his I O U had nothing to do with that purpose, except to follow as a consequence.

Chetta suggested that Roker be invited for a reason something in the line of that which applied to Bradley,—Roker would make a capital refrigerator, she said with a laugh. Other young ladies and gentlemen were invited to the number of six or eight couples in all. Delicate and very expensive lunch was provided, also archery implements, swings and other means of amusement. The party were to take a Hudson River boat early in the forenoon, and return in the evening.

While Alice was making her toilet for this occasion, Tom Norwell sat in the library conversing with his father. Tom referred to the wonderful progress of the West. He grew

enthusiastic over the scenes he had witnessed at the sessions of the Chicago Board of Trade. He had been greatly amused at beholding the shouting, gesticulating, struggling mass of operators, who crowded around the wheat and corn pits, and whose conduct at times suggested the scenes which tradition ascribes to a Donnybrook fair. Tom thought there was much money to be made, and he should like to try his hand before others got it all.

"There's plenty of time, Thomas. There will be money made long after we are both in our graves."

"I am more interested in what is to be made before that, father. I am losing time."

"Not while you abstain from speculation. That is one of the greatest curses of our day. Shun it as you would shun a plague."

"You've dipped into it, millions deep." Mr. Norwell moved uneasily in his chair.

"My investments are hardly in the nature of a speculation, Thomas."

If Tom Norwell had been a trifle more observant he might have noticed that his father did not speak with the same confident tone in which he had heretofore referred to his stock investments. Continental & Pacific had gradually mounted by easy steps to sixty-eight, which left Mr. Norwell a profit of two hundred and eighty thousand dollars on his forty thousand shares of stock bought at sixty-one, and one hundred and thirty thousand dollars on ten thousand shares bought at fifty-five, in all, four hundred and ten thousand dollars. This was a clear profit made in a few months, without the expenditure of a single day's labor, or, in fact, without an effort of any kind.

Is it surprising that with such gains men should rush into this modern species of gambling transacted under the guise of legitimate business? To bet what the price of wheat or a given kind of stocks will be next month differs no wise in principle from betting whether the next card issuing from a faro dealer's little box will be a king or a queen. The only difference between the two is that public opinion has unwisely pronounced the one reputable, while it has wisely branded the other disreputable. One is called business, and is genteel; the other is called gambling, and has a certain odium attached to it. Both have an irresistible fascination for their victims. Both are widespread, the genteel form widest by

far, and both yearly carry desolation to thousands of happy homes. Many a man who fails in business without apparent cause, many a family who without visible reasons leave a cosy home to dwell in a shanty can trace their ruin to this universal mania for speculative gambling. It is a national vice which is consuming not only the means, but the morals of the American people.*

Every shining dollar has within its surface an enchanted mirror. Viewed from the proper angle it gives forth beautiful images of peace and domestic bliss. Turned but a hair-breadth from its true position it reflects the images of alluring sirens who lead men to destruction, some to the spendthrift's riot, some to the miser's rags, while others are turned to men of stone, whose cold, pitiless eyes stare forever fixed on gold, and their hollow voices hoarsely echo without ceasing, Give, give, give. After a pause Tom added:

"It looks to me like speculation."

"No matter how it looks, my son. Avoid it if you would retain peace of mind and self-respect. Make money slowly. During the first ten years I was in business I made only ten thousand dollars. In the next ten I made one hundred thousand. Then money flowed in freely of itself. My son, never under any circumstances become a stock or grain speculator. As you value honor and that integrity which is far above gold, avoid it. It will curse you forever." Perhaps there was a trifle of feeling in Mr. Norwell's tone. At any rate Tom looked at his father in surprise, and exclaimed:

"Why, father, one would think that you had been badly caught yourself."

In truth, Mr. Norwell was uneasy. For several days there had been vague rumors that the mountain portions of the Continental & Pacific would take a mint of money to build; that the vast expenses there would more than consume all the profits of the level portions which the government subsidies sufficed to build. It was said that the company were in straits for money, though how that could be it was difficult to see. At any rate the rumor grew and excited distrust. C. & P. stock declined.

"Oh no, Thomas, I never was bitten that way in my life. But as an illustration of what I was saying our stock declined yesterday two cents."

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*Note 5.—Fictitious sales of petroleum.

"No!" exclaimed Tom in astonishment.

"That lessens the profits just one hundred thousand dollars."

"Sell out."

"No, I hardly think I shall do that. Ophir advises me to hold on. He says the report about the mountain sections is only talk manufactured to hurt the company, and started by other transportation interests which are jealous of us."

"Can you rely on Ophir?"

"Certainly! He is an old and tried friend."

"Then if he says it's all right what's the use of worrying? His opinion is worth more than that of any other man, unless it be Ingledee's."

"Of course I am not situated so as to get any inside opinion from Ingledee. I think I shall watch the street to-day." So saying, Mr. Norwell left the room. He had hardly gone before a servant announced that "Little Hackett" wished to see him or Mr. Tom. Hackett was at once shown in. After a few preliminaries he remarked:

"I've brought my money, Mr. Tom. There's a thousand dollars. Just got it from the bank yesterday. If it does well, Mary will put her thousand into something of the sort."

"I'm going up the Hudson to a picnic, Hackett. But I'll write a note to Robinson, in Ophir's office, and ask him to arrange the matter for you. You ought to double your money in a month."

The note was written, and Hackett's pale face lighted with a gleam of pleasure. He was going to put all he possessed in the world into a place where it would double in a month. At that rate he would be a rich man in two or three years. Then he would satisfy the dream of his life by traveling to distant lands, whose marvelous climate and healing waters would infuse new life into his moribund frame. He would return healthy, happy and with stores of useful knowledge acquired in strange lands. Even the poor, the weak, the deformed, can dream as well as the best of us.

It was a jolly company that took possession of a grassy slope, shaded by plenty of trees, on the bank of that most beautiful of American rivers, the Hudson. They had all the requisites for a happy day, including good health, good temper and high spirits. Every little accessory to the occasion which money could buy was there. When poor people start out for

a good time much of the pleasure of the occasion must be derived from their convicing themselves that they are really satisfied with what they have. To the rustic who has never seen anything refined this is easy enough. But to the poor person who has lived beside affluent neighbors, and has insensibly acquired many of their tastes by observation, this feeling of satisfaction comes hard, if it comes at all. While he ought to be enjoying himself his pleasure is marred by the unpleasant reflection that after all he cannot afford it. Philosophy is commonly supposed to ameliorate poverty. But to enable a person to discover real pleasure in privation, or to see how ten to sixteen hours per day unmitigated labor may become man's chiefest blessing, requires an amount of philosophy seldom possessed, except by persons of an assured income, who, unfortunately for the theory, do not need it for economic purposes.

All who were invited to the picnic had come, though Bradley was obliged to negotiate a small loan, his room-mate in this instance being the Rothschild who advanced the funds. Frederick Snicker was there, although it would not have been surprising had the state of his health detained him at home. He had lately experienced a trouble compared with which the affair of Luseba Aplington was not worthy of mention.

"Tom, old chap, do you know, I've been vewy uncomfortable all week."

"What's the matter now, Snicker? Another love affair?"

"Now, Mr. Norwell, weally, I hardly expected this of you. 'Pon my word this is abwupt. Sir, I consider that abwupt." Having given utterance to this momentous decision he threw his head back a little and bent his cane viciously with both hands. His action was a genteel, but very, *very* mild counterfeit of those of the bellicose Hibernian who has an imaginary chip on his shoulder which everybody declines to see.

"Beg pardon, Snicker," said Tom laughing. "Everybody knows, of course, that you are a tremendous fellow with the girls, but I suppose I shouldn't have mentioned it publicly. Still I've always thought," continued Tom, in a half-confidential tone, "that your little affairs of the heart would get you into trouble sometime."

"Oh, it's all right, Mr. Norwell. Of course you meant no harm," replied Snicker, well pleased by the allusion to his ravages among female hearts. He was evidently considered

a dangerous fellow, for hadn't Silas Ingledee and Tom Norwell both told him so.

"May I inquire the nature of the trouble you allude to, Mr. Snicker?"

"Oh, certainly, with pleasure. You see I have a wegulah wotation of perfumes for each day in the week — Jockey Club for Monday, Patchouly for Tuesday, Ylang on Wednesday, and so on. In that way the odohs get delightfully confused, you know, and overlap each other like the colors of the wainbow. It gives a kind of ecstatic what-the-deuce-is-it sort of odoh, you know, that is chawmingly confusing and excites cuwiosity. Then it's weally quite a study to discover if you cawn't catch a little of Monday's Jockey Club hanging round till Wednesday, overlapping Patchouly clear onto Ylang Ylang. Did you ever try that, Mr. Norwell?"

"I don't think I could do it."

"No? Weally? Well, it does requiah practice. But as I was going to say I got Wednesday's perfume by mistake on Tuesday. That put the whole week out of joint, and I'm afraid next week will hardly straighten it out."

"That's too bad. You ought to put the day of the week on each bottle on a plain label."

"I do, but you see I made a doocid bad break, and forgot the day of the week."

Everybody was laughing, talking, and having a jolly time. Chetta Ingledee's rosy cheeks and sparkling black eyes proclaimed her supremely happy. Alice Norwell, usually so sedate, was as playful as a kitten. Miss Snicker's laugh rang out continuously. Somehow, it had very little depth to it, but its length was apparently interminable. Some of the young gentlemen were retailing the superannuated jokes which they had kept carefully packed away and neatly labeled "Suitable for the society of ladies." Some of the young men and young ladies, too, had the very latest, smartest, brightest bon mots which they handled in a way that reminded one of children playing with edged tools.

Bradley and another young man, both of whom were invited to be useful, were adjusting a swing, and getting ready for croquet. Mr. Roker was, with unparalleled levity for him, making lemonade under Chetta's superintendence, and improving the time, if not the drink, by engaging in continuous conversation, repeatedly punctuated by his ugly laugh, that sounded remarkably like a snarl, in spite of the fact that he

had all the stops of his humor on at full blast. Miss Harrie Snicker was bustling everywhere and doing nothing. Rushing up to Garmand, she exclaimed:

"My Lord! excuse me." She added, with a becoming little blush: "I mean, Mr. Garmand. Can't you assist the ladies in setting the table?"

"Oh! aw—now—don't ask—with pleasure," he replied, with a very low bow. "You couldn't put me at any more agreeable occupation, you know."

The table was soon spread, or rather the repast was placed on the tablecloths, which were laid on the clean, fresh grass under the thickest shade. An occasional ray of sunlight strayed through the waving branches, and danced and flickered over the tempting viands as if it would seize them for its own. Now it darted into the pickles, then onto the cake, next it made the deep color of an orange glow with a ruddier hue. It was that delightful sort of guest which brings good cheer, tastes everything, and consumes nothing. All heartily enjoyed the repast in spite of the fact that red ants got into the sandwiches, and black ants into the pies, and a daddy-long-legs stuck hopelessly on top of the jelly in ludicrous helplessness, like a child stuck in deep mud. The child may blubber and get out with the sacrifice of his shoes. The daddy-long-legs is obliged to leave some of his superfluous limbs which, perhaps, he doesn't miss greatly.

The only incident that interrupted the flow of festivity, was a huge black spider, with an aldermanic body and an abnormal development of legs, which darted under the folds of one of the young ladies' skirts. There was a chorus of screams, a great rustling of drapery, and the agile limbs of several maidens transferred their fair possessors suddenly to the top of a mossy log, a point of vantage where no spider would care to venture. The daring aggressor was never seen again, and the festivity was resumed. A picnic is enjoyable chiefly because it is a picnic, and not from any occult machinery within it for producing happiness. As spiders and bugs cause a lively remembrance of the fact that a pičnic is going on, they must in the natural logic of events contribute greatly to the pleasures of the occasion. Doubtless, this is the reason why picnickers always select a locality prolific in insects.

After dinner some swung, some gossiped, some strolled, some talked soft things at the foot of the great trees, others romped with zest. Since they were not under the eagle eye

of Propriety, nearly all flirted assiduously. Tender words which seemed almost to presage tender declarations, fell on the ears of willing maidens like the sweet honey dew on the fresh leaves of the forest. The sentiments were sweet, and, though they meant nothing, as both parties fully realized, they served as an excellent practice in the art of refined flirting which has reached such a high state of perfection nowadays among people of leisure.

When the noonday sun had somewhat spent its forces it was decided that all should go boating. At the blast of a tiny silver trumpet the party reassembled, interrupting several very interesting tete-a-tetes. Some of the boats were just large enough for two, others would hold an entire party. Those which held two were in great demand. In fact, Tom Norwell and a few other gentlemen had hired theirs quietly first thing on entering the grounds that morning. Roker would have given a great deal could he have had Chetta in one of these boats all to himself. But he was too good a general to challenge his enemy to combat when the advantage was all on the other side. He suspected that Tom and Chetta already had an understanding on the subject of the boat. Roker had established confidential relations with her over the lemonade, and had even managed to get his fingers tangled up with hers, opening a package of sugar. She had been frank, and almost gracious. He would not spoil all that by attempting too much. He was right in his surmises, for Tom appropriated Chetta as a matter of course. He did it as easily and naturally as a robin would appropriate your early cherries. Aren't cherries made to be eaten?

In spite of Roker's philosophy and his determination to bide his time, his heart gave a great bound that sent the surging blood in volumes which threatened to suffocate him. A biting pang of jealousy shot for an instant over him, that maddening, unendurable sort of jealousy which springs from a feeling that a rival is preferred, and that your claim is in reality exceedingly poor, while apparently your chance is equal with his. His face showed color in spite of himself, and his scalp darted forward, but instantly resumed its place. He turned quickly away to look at the boats, and in a moment was the same dignified, polished icicle as before.

Miss Snicker had managed to secure "My Lord" Garmand, and was exceedingly happy. Bradley had been very attentive to her; had peeled her orange at dinner, and taken

a little stroll with her in search of wild flowers. Though without any heart, she still had a little conscience, and she felt that something was due to her preserver. But after all, what right had a twenty-dollar clerk to presume? Indeed, if it wasn't for his exquisite complexion and splendid manners, and handiness to fetch and carry, he would be disgustingly common. He ought to know enough to keep his place. It's all well enough to fall in love, that is very nice, but to presume is quite another thing. Thus reasoned the woman whom Bradley thought most of. Miss Snicker felt it incumbent on herself as projector of the party to see that everything went off smoothly.

"Mr. Bradley, will you please enter a large boat? I know you are the best boatman in the party, and should be where your services will do most good." Half angry at the compliment with which he was dismissed, Bradley entered the large boat with Roker, Alice Norwell and others.

Garmand and Miss Snicker were gliding smoothly over the clear water before his easy English stroke. It was much easier to manage the boat than to manage his companion. When a man devotes a lifetime of study to one subject he is called a specialist. Miss Snicker was apparently a specialist, for her talk ran chiefly on the relative merits of clam pie, fried oysters and lobster salad, the thrilling rythms of the lancers and other fashionable dances, or the latest thing at the milliners and dressmakers, which, of course, a horrid man knew nothing about. Literature, art, music, she knew so little of, that she had sense enough to avoid them. She wished to appear well in his eyes. He was anxious to switch the conversation off in a direction that might arouse a trifle of interest. She had already told him half a dozen times on previous occasions that she was passionately fond of clam pie. He was not liable to forget that. He wished to localize another idea center, and remarked:

"This spot is delightfully primitive. I suppose there are Indians further back in the hills?"

"No, I guess not. I think there are none closer than Niagara Falls."

"Do they ever—aw—scalp tourists? I was reading this morning that a scalper was arrested somewhere out West."

"No, they only peddle beads and moccasins."

"Ah, they are of a mercenary turn of mind. How sad to see this simple son of the forest become avaricious."

"Oh, I think, Mr. Garmand, they are perfectly horrid. I can't bear the sight of one. Please don't mention the dreadful creatures."

"Suggests tales of cawnage," hastily replied Garmand. "Beg pardon most humbly, Miss Snickeh, for mentioning a disagreeable subject." He scarcely knew what to say next. This young lady was incapable of talking about anything unpleasant or common. She had no subjects of her own to suggest. Yet she wished to appear well in his eyes, and was afraid that she had offended him. She suddenly had a brilliant idea. She would talk about Europe. That was not common. She began:

"England must be a great deal nicer than this country, isn't it, Mr. Garmand?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure." This was so much a matter of course that he seemed surprised at her mentioning it.

"It must be just too exquisite for anything," she went on. "Only think of the lords and ladies and dukes and earls and balls and parties and things." The word thing is a very convenient one to bridge a chasm in a train of thought. In this case it stood for all the elegant details of English high life.

"It is unequaled elsewhere in the world," he replied with true English feeling of superiority.

"Oh, I do wish I could live there. This country is so common." Then Miss Snicker blushed a little in spite of herself, for she had unconsciously betrayed a secret wish of her heart. He, however, did not appear to notice it.

"Of course this country is common," he admitted in a tone which implied it was pitiably common, "but then you see it is a delightful study. Everything is so absurdly fresh, you know, right from nature, and so very easy got at. I almost wish I was a poet or a painter. Have half a mind to become one or the other, just to take the thing in properly."

"It must be exquisitely delightful to associate with lords and earls and dukes and duchesses. Only think! no danger of meeting any disagreeable people." Suddenly she queried: "Mr. Garmand, how do you tell a duke from an earl?" She spoke of them as if they had been newly-discovered animals, without the advantage of having been frequently pictured in books. Hence her question was a pertinent one.

"That's very easy, indeed," he replied.

"But *how*, I'd like to know."

"Well, you see, you must know the earl or the duke, you know."

"Is that all? Don't they have any badges or stripes or marks about them?"

"They're much like other men, save the lordly air, you know." As God had nothing to do with the making of dukes and earls, contrary to Miss Snickeh's opinion, these noble productions of royalty can not be easily distinguished at all times from common clay.

"I've coaxed pa to let Freddie and me go to Europe, but he says it's no use till we get older and have seen more of this country. But don't you sometimes get the nobility all mixed up and call a count an earl, or a duchess a nabob?"

"No, that's easily managed when you once understand. It takes practice. It scarcely comes by nature," he replied, as he quietly looked at her to observe the effect of the remark. The conversation was getting too deep for both of them. This shallow-brained girl might yet discover that with all his money Wyndleigh Garmand knew very little of the nobility by association. Though distantly related in a shady sort of way to an obscure peer, he had never been in the very best society but a few times in his life. It was evidently much safer to talk about America,—a subject neither of them knew anything about. He would willingly talk, if there was no danger of annoying questions about details. Had he ever enjoyed the blessed privilege coveted by many Englishman of having at some time been kicked by a lord, he could have referred to the distinguished event with pleasure. He had had no such good fortune. By way of changing the subject, he inquired:

"Where are the great plains, Miss Snickeh?"

"Whiteplains?"

"No, the great plains that we read of where a fellow can travel for days and weeks, you know, and see nothing but buffaloes and wild bears?"

"Oh!" she said carelessly, "I understand now; they are away out West." Just where apparently made no difference. Their conversational resources were utterly exhausted. Neither spoke for some minutes.

Meantime Chetta and Tom Norwell were having a thoroughly good time. They had known each other so long that there was no restraint between them. She was happy. She felt her power to keep him at her side, although he had

never spoken of love, and had never really considered himself her lover. They rowed to shore, and joined the rest of the party. Two servants, who had charge of the impedimenta, were busy transferring the things to the steamer, and soon all were on their way to the city, thoroughly tired, but agreeing that they had a most delightful time.

CHAPTER XV.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

Wall Street was uneasy. For some time there had been a feverishness in the stock market. There was no panic, nor was one feared; but the general feeling was one of distrust. On the day following Mr. Norwell's conversation with his son, Continental & Pacific had dropped two cents lower, and Norwell had lost another hundred thousand dollars. In a few days more, at this rate, he would not only lose all the money he had made, but was liable to become a pauper, unless he chose to sell at a great sacrifice. His anxiety was so great that he felt the weight of ten years added to his life in two days. His erect figur was bowed, and deep lines appeared in his careworn face. Right across his path, which had been illuminated by golden sunshine and beautified by pleasant prospects, there opened suddenly, as a deadly disease comes in a day, a dark, yawning chasm of ruin. In the fewest words possible he told Tom that stocks were unsettled and feverish. Tom's advice was such as could hardly be expected from one of his impulsive, daring temperament. In brief it was "sell out."

Tom never suspected how bad things really were. Mr. Norwell acted like one in a dream. He avoided Alice entirely. He dared not let her know the extent of the threatened danger. He had confidently expected to leave his children enough to place them in affluence for the rest of their lives. Now, possibly, he could not leave them what he began life with himself,—the practical knowledge of getting a living.

In desperation, Norwell consulted with Ophir daily. The railway king advised him to hold on. It was only a tempo-

rary flurry, and things were sure to improve. Congress had been prodigal in gifts to this colossal national fraud and its twin infamy engineered by the Ingledee clique. The people were building both roads and presenting them to the favored recipients of a nation's misplaced bounty. It was difficult to see why their stock should decline at all. Norwell suspected that somebody was manipulating the stock and engineering a tremendous squeeze. He intimated as much to Ophir, but that gentleman, though a very lamb, seemed to have no fears of the all-devouring bear. No, he said, this was merely a fluctuation based, he thought, on the rumors circulated concerning the enormous cost of the mountain portions of the road. It would blow over, and then the stock would go higher than ever. It did blow over, but like the cyclone that blows over the golden harvests and peaceful villages, it left only the blackness of death and desolation in its track.

Down went the stock till Norwell's profits were all consumed. He would fight this movement rather than be crushed. Little he knew the men he was fighting. They were as voracious as the shark, as cruel as the hyena, as insatiable as death. He borrowed two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in cash, for his own name was good any day for that amount. This vast sum disappeared in the quicksands of Wall street, and not a ripple marked the spot it sank into. Down went the Continental & Pacific. Other stocks and interests took the alarm, and there was a general sharp decline. Men rushed hither and thither seeking money to protect themselves at two per cent. per day. Men suddenly began asking themselves if the country was about to experience a great financial crisis. Appeals were made to the Government to interpose its strong arm between the business interests of the country and the pirates who were desperately attempting to wreck them. Norwell's brokers in self-defence refused to assist him longer. He had not allowed them to close his deal while it was possible. It was now impossible. He must be responsible for losses, which were already nearly a million dollars. They demanded settlement. Had he been like many of the operators of Wall street he would have refused payment, and resorted to legal delays and quibbles. Probably he could have saved himself by ruining the brokers. At a forced sale it would require every dollar he possessed to satisfy them. In a dazed sort of way, like one who is suddenly roused from deep slumber and scarcely knows for a time who he is, or

what he is, he signed the deeds prepared by the lawyers, transferred his valuable real-estate with all the securities at his banker's, and entering his carriage drove home to the mansion no longer his, a hopeless bankrupt. He told Tom in a broken voice that all was lost, and enjoined him not to inform Alice just yet.

"I shall not be down to dinner. Excuse me to her."

Mr. Norwell entered his library and tried to think. Had this calamity like an insidious disease or some foreseen ruin, been approaching for months or years, he could have learned to look it calmly in the face, and after awhile even to welcome the end as a relief from suspense. It was so sudden and so awful he could not realize it. All had occurred in one brief week. As he paced the floor the conviction grew on him that he and others had been the victims of conspiracy. His blood boiled at the thought of his wrongs, till his heart seemed ready to burst. He had heard rumors that Ophir was at the bottom of the whole movement. It could not be possible that his life long friend, the companion of his boyhood, his old chum at the district school, should prove such a deliberate, black-hearted traitor. Ah! he had forgotten the old, old story so often repeated in all history, that avarice and the love of power will turn him whom they take possession of into a cool, calculating, deliberate fiend. He remarked to Tom as the latter was starting down stairs to dinner:

"My boy, we have been ruined by treachery."

"Yes, father, and the traitor shall pay for it with his life. He cannot hide behind the specious mask of friendship. I'll spend a lifetime running him down."

"It is useless, my boy," said Mr. Norwell sadly, "they have the law on their side and money enough to buy courts and juries. If I, rich man that I was, could not contend with them successfully, what hope is there for a penniless boy?" Mr. Norwell could no longer restrain himself, but wept like a child.

Tom excused his father's absence from the table, saying important business had detained him longer than usual, and he felt too tired to eat anything. As for himself he had eaten a very hearty lunch in the middle of the day. Alice saw at once by her brother's manner that something unusual had happened.

"Tom, there is something the matter. What is it?"

"Well, the fact is, father has lost considerable money in the decline of prices."

"Oh, is that all," she replied. She had always been accustomed to an abundance of money. What if some had been lost! Doubtless there was plenty left. Still she felt sorry for her father, and eating but little of the luxurious repast, while Tom ate nothing, they left the table. Mr. Norwell paced the floor in hopeless despair. By degrees the full consequence of his ruin became apparent. The more he thought of the transactions of the last few days the more he felt he had been robbed. Had these men come and held a pistol to his head and taken his money it would have been no more a theft. He had been betrayed, stabbed in the back by a sneaking foe, and that foe his so-called best friend. It was all apparent now, in spite of Ophir's denials.

His brain throbbed till it seemed as if it would burst. The blood gathered in his heart in great waves which surged till his very chest seemed to swell beneath their impulses. Suddenly there was a spasm of dreadful pain, a dizziness, and he fell heavily to the floor. The left ventricle of the heart had given away, and he who was a few days ago, the well-known millionaire, was now only insensate clay, over which two fond children knelt in piteous transports of grief.

The panic in Wall street soon subsided. Ophir, Chrysolite, and one or two others having hammered the Continental & Pacific down to forty, bought up vast blocks of it quietly, and behold! it began to rise steadily, till in a few weeks it was again at seventy-five, and these men had made several millions.* Excitement died out and business resumed its accustomed channels. Few understood the cause of the panic those who did thought little of it. Expressions like these were common: "Talk about your smart men! few of them can get ahead of Ophir, I tell you." "He's the shrewdest man in this country to-day." "Ophir has a wonderful head," and so forth. The tone of these remarks seemed to indicate that Ophir was a citizen to be proud of, and it would be well if the country could only produce more Ophirs. Men would shun forever some unfortunate acquaintance who chanced to expiate at Sing Sing the consequences of his crimes. Yet they would boast of even a speaking acquaintance with one of these magnificent thieves, who steal a million at a grab, and use it to subvert law, corrupt law-makers, and plunder the people. They argue blindly, "What's the use to worry.

*Note 6.—Breach of Friendship.

Those things always right themselves. These big fish only prey on each other." This fallacious and imbecile argument betrays an utter absence of thought upon the question. Such things do *not* right themselves as all the world's history shows, where it is written in lines of greed, corruption and blood.

A little reflection will convince any one that no man can make fifty millions honestly, nor even five millions. If he gets so much money, he does it by taking part that belongs to somebody else. The part he takes will be regulated by his ability to seize, or his fear of retribution. Let us not flatter ourselves that these freebooters will sometime get enough. They will continue to pile millions on millions in very wantonness, and their descendants will claim as a right the privileges which the present generation have the more politic impudence to buy. Conscience is no part of such men.

Lest some one may construe these remarks as an attack on all wealth, let me say that large fortunes may be honestly made in legitimate ways. A man by a lifetime of close attention to business, combined with prudent economy, may become very wealthy, and remain strictly honest. I am in sympathy with honest wealth. It is a blessing to the community when in the right hands. It is not a blessing in the hands of monopolists. It is dangerous to give any man too much power. These monopolists of modern days are the successors of the military plunderers, who in ancient times piled up vast fortunes by robbing conquered countries and sacking cities, or who in feudal times, levied blackmail at the head of a band of savage soldiery; or of those titled locusts, who in the sixteenth century fattened on the people under the guise of royal grants and favors. Money and power were the animating motives of all. The pirate of old boldly proclaimed his calling. The pirates of our own great republic plunder the people in the insidious disguise of public benefactors, under subsidies granted by subservient legislative bodies. Shall we increase this class of money barons to eat up the earnings of the people? Or is the crop already sufficient?*

The sad day of the funeral passed as even such days must pass. Life seemed to have no more attractions for the Norwells. To lose a fond parent was hard enough to bear, though in this case the sorrow was rendered doubly poignant, by the sudden and awful manner of his death. As yet they

* Note 7.—Millionaires of the United States.

had scarcely given a thought to the stern fact that they must leave their comfortable home and work for a living. Tom felt this much more keenly than Alice. He lacked her strength of character and fortitude under adversity. Besides, he was now constantly thinking of the hardships she must endure in entering the already crowded avenues of employment, to earn a miserable subsistence. In his bitterness he vowed vengeance.

Friends condoled with them each after his own fashion, some in few words aptly chosen, that spoke the sympathy that is sweet to the heart, others in polished sentences that annoyed the wounded spirit with unmeaning phrase. Heart speaks to heart in sorrow. He who has not suffered cannot console. Snicker senior thought that consolation could be weighed, measured and transferred like sugar.

"It was a squally time, I tell you, Norwell," he remarked. "Glad I wasn't in for anything. It reminded me of the time when two of us tried to corner sugar way back at the beginning of the war. That was an exciting time, you can just bet. Why, once I didn't sleep three hours in a week, and ate nothing for a month. Once the market went against us, and I thought we were gone up. Why, I tell you, Norwell, several times I really felt as if I should bust I was so excited. But we came out all right, and scooped in just a million apiece. It takes no common head though, to speculate successfully." Tom quietly walked away from this well-meaning but egotistical old bore, who finished by saying to himself: "Sorry for them. It's too bad. They're a pretty decent family and deserve better luck."

The position of Chetta Ingledee with reference to the Norwells was a more delicate one. She belonged to the very class who had wrought all this ruin. She only half realized this, it is true. Nevertheless, she wrote a warm-hearted, sympathetic letter to Alice, condoling with her in her great grief and offering assistance. Alice replied courteously, but declined the proffered aid with thanks. She had never quite approved of Tom's intimacy with Chetta, and this letter smacked a little of patronage to her over-wrought, sensitive mind. Tom Norwell went to Mr. Ingledee in the course of a few days, and begged him to disclose the inside facts of the recent squeeze. Ingledee pitied the broken man before him, but evaded a direct answer. He said when urged:

"It will do you no good, Norwell. The thing is done. It

was a disagreeable affair for a great many people, though you have suffered most. Frankly, I tell you there is no redress. You might as well give the matter no further thought." As well ask a man with a raging toothache to laugh and make merry. Ingledee little suspected the kind of redress Tom Norwell meditated. The latter, after a moment's silence, continued:

"Mr. Ingledee, I lay it all to Ophir. He is the prime mover in the whole diabolical scheme. Am I not right?" Ingledee was silent, but that silence was itself an answer. Tom rose and remarking, "He is a scoundrel and double-dealing traitor," left the office.

That night Mr. Ophir sat in the private office of his palatial residence. Tom Norwell sat in what had once been his father's cosy library, trying in a vague way to devise some plans for the future. Something must be done soon, for absolutely nothing had been saved from the wreck beyond his sister's jewels, and a few other articles of personal property of no great value. His gloomy meditations were disturbed by a knock at the door. A servant entered and announced that Miss Hackett wished to see him. With a start he realized her errand in an instant, and told the servant to show her in. Aunt Rhoda was accompanied by Little Hackett. She began before she had scarcely entered the room:

"This is sorry work for all of us, Mr. Tom."

"It is indeed, Aunt Rhoda."

"Is it as bad as reported?"

"It is worse."

"There must be something left?"

"Not a dollar."

"Oh don't say that, Mr. Tom," she exclaimed in a hysterical key. "What will the poor, sick boy do? Every cent he had in the world is gone. For him my brother and me toiled an' scrimped an' saved because we knowed he never could take care of himself. No, you won't be so hard-hearted, Mr. Tom?" she begged with tears in her eyes. "Keep out his thousand first: he needs it worse than them rich men. Do, won't you?" In the agony of Mr. Norwell's last business transactions Hackett's poor thousand was entirely forgotten. He could and would have gladly saved it, but such a small affair stood no chance of being remembered amidst transactions involving millions. It was too late now.

"Aunt Rhoda," replied Tom sadly, "I would save it if I could, but it is gone, all gone."

"There's always a way to pay the rich first and cheat the poor. But God sees sich doins, and he'll take account of them as sure as there's a judgment day." Tom took no notice of the implication on his father's motives, for the poor woman was beside herself over the loss of their bit of money. Little Hackett meantime had said never a word. He was in reality a child yet, for whom others must speak.

"Aunt Rhoda," said Tom, "it almost breaks my heart to think of this business. It might have been all right if I had not advised you to put your money into it."

"When things were goin' so bad I think you might 'a saved his any way, seein' he's a poor crippled orphan." Here Aunt Rhoda gave way in a burst of sobs. It was useless to reason with this woman, for she knew nothing of business. But Little Hackett would not hear anything said against his former benefactor.

"Aunt Rhoda," he said, "what's the use of taking on so? The money's gone, and I guess that's the end of it. Mr. Tom wasn't to blame, and I know his father wasn't, for he was too good a man to cheat anybody. As for the money, I'll get along without it some way, just as I have done. Maybe I'll wear out a little quicker, but I don't care. Money never could make much out o' me any way. I'll not make another complaint. I don't think it's right, for Mr. Tom and Miss Alice have lost so much more than we have. They're used to plenty of money, too, and can't get along without it. Then there's their father too"—here Little Hackett could no longer control himself. Great tears coursed down his cheeks. He turned and walked slowly from the room, followed by Aunt Rhoda, neither saying another word.

For a brief time Tom Norwell felt almost like a convicted criminal. He had been the means of causing these poor people, who were his friends, to suffer a great loss. However well meant his intentions had been, the result was disastrous, and in his overwrought, nervous condition he accused himself more than he should have done. He now realized that he should not have advised any one to invest money subject to such dangerous contingencies. He felt as if the old days had returned when might made right. It was little use to expect justice unless one carried the remedy in his own hands. With this desperate feeling a sudden resolve shaped itself in his mind. He went up stairs with an eager, nervous step, took his hat, placed a shining little pistol in his pocket, and walked rapidly toward Fifth Avenue.

CHAPTER XVI.

"VENGEANCE IS MINE."

Mr. Ophir's office at his residence was a comfortable room off the library on the first floor. Electric bells communicated with the stables, the conservatory, the kitchen, in fact with all parts of the house. He had only to touch a certain button when his coachman appeared, another, and the butler appeared, another, and the stalwart Italian emerged from some mysterious recess at the rear of the house.

The spirting gas jets shed a pleasant softened glow around the little office. Mr. Ophir's spirits were in a like mellow and satisfactory condition. He had engineered the great squeeze in Continental & Pacific successfully. He had sold out high, hammered the stock down, bought it up again, and now owned most of the stock with a clear million in ready cash as the profits of the transaction. True, he had ruined scores of men, but what of that? He laughed to himself as he sipped a little wine and nibbled a cracker. He sneered at the people whose laws and institutions made such things possible. He thought they were a pack of d—d fools, who deserved to be swindled. He felt secure in his high-handed disregard of public rights, for this most daring outrage of all had attracted no particular comment or censure, except from a few persons. Most of the community knew little about it and cared less. Hs had enough money now, and certainly was not lacking the brass to bluff, buy or bulldoze his way through thick and thin, come what may.

It was very difficult to approach the person of this great man. He had constantly a fear that some unpleasant visitor might wish to see him unexpectedly. Like the worshiper of God the worshiper of mammon must pay pew rent, and this apprehension was one of the penalties which Ophir paid for notoriety. On the evening in question the muscular porter whose duty it was to attend the front door, contrary to orders, abandoned his post for a few minutes to a housemaid.

Norwell struck the heavy knocker, trusting to luck to get inside.

When the housemaid opened the door he slipped quickly past her, saying, "I have a special appointment with Mr. Ophir;" passed quietly down the main hall and turned into the recess leading to the door of Ophir's office. Turning the handle, he stood like an apparition before that gentleman. Ophir rose without betraying any surprise, drew another chair forward, and courteously asked Norwell to be seated, remarking:

"I'm glad to see you, Norwell."

"I haven't come to sit down, Mr. Ophir. We can transact our business better standing."

"We can talk more comfortably sitting. You have business, I presume. I'll order some refreshments."

"Touch that button and you are a dead man," said Tom, instantly placing the shining barrel of his revolver to Ophir's temple. The latter withdrew his hand from the vicinity of the little button in the wall, shifted his head so as to look Norwell in the eye, and calmly replied:

"Mr. Norwell, I'm surprised. Why do you slip into my house in the guise of an assassin? You have lost your senses evidently. You were born a gentleman."

"And have lived to be ruined by a traitor."

"Harsh words and violence do not remedy wrongs. If you have a grievance, state it;" and again he shifted his head a little from the dangerous weapon.

Tom Norwell stood astounded at the coolness of this man, who never betrayed fear by word or gesture. He had expected that Ophir would plead for mercy like a guilty wretch, when, after hearing his humiliating confession, he would shoot him like a dog, though the gallows were the penalty. But here was a man who had no confessions to make, no whining to do, no pleading for mercy. Tom's anger flamed under such unblushing effrontery till a very devil took possession of him.

"Words can not express the contempt I feel for the traitor who will betray his best friend and rob his family. Oh, curse your cool villainy! You shall die like a dog!" Ophir started back at these words a little, but Tom's quick eye discovered that the movement which simulated fear really brought his victim dangerously near the row of electric buttons. He continued in a hoarse, low tone:

"Don't move another step. I can kill you as well where you stand."

"Mr. Norwell, do you really mean to kill a defenseless man?" asked Ophir, in a calm tone, which only exasperated Tom further.

"Yes!" he hissed.

"Think of my family."

"You never thought of mine." Norwell was not naturally a cruel man, nor even a strong willed one. His impulsive nature was quick to resent a bitter wrong. But to do such an awful deed he must do it at once. He felt his resolution waver, but the mention of family brought all his wrongs back in an overwhelming rush. He exclaimed:

"I'll give you one minute to ask God to spare your guilty soul; only one."

"So short a time is useless," and Ophir hung his head, but betrayed no sign of fear. Was this immovable man made of iron? Had even death no terrors? Or did he hope that time would wear out the resolution of his dreadful enemy? Or, perhaps, he expected relief? The silence was oppressive. It seemed an age since Tom had entered the room, although only two or three minutes had elapsed. After a brief pause Ophir replied slowly, and with bowed head, as if he felt at last that his time was really come:

"I'm not prepared to die. Wait. I'm very thirsty. Let me have one more drink of water." In a little recess was a marble wash basin, with hot and cold water pipes. Norwell saw there were no electric bells there, and said only: "Be quick." Ophir stepped toward the basin. Instead of turning the faucet of the water pipe he touched what appeared to be a towel peg inside the recess, and then turned on the water and made busy filling a tumbler. In a moment the door opened and two powerful men seized Norwell from behind and disarmed him. He remained a moment in speechless amazement. Had an earthquake rent the walls he would not have been more surprised.

"Curse him! What a fool I've been."

"Call a policeman," was Ophir's calm order to a servant.

Norwell was clearly trapped. He might be sent to state's prison without the poor satisfaction of having rid the community of his enemy, who was a foe to society. He struggled to free himself, but the two strong men held him with an iron grip.

"I'll have my revenge yet," he cried to Ophir.

"You had better not criminate yourself, Mr. Norwell," was the only reply.

He had not long to wait. A policeman soon entered and arrested him on the charge of attempting to commit murder. Tom lay that night in a cell in the Tombs.

The news of the attempt to kill Ophir in his own home spread with incredible rapidity. Late as was the hour, the evening papers got out extras, with startling head lines which might have led any one not familiar with the enterprise of modern journalism to infer that one-half of New York was murdering the other half. Newsboys yelled, "All about the assassination of John Ophir." One sensational sheet put it: "Awful crime on Fifth avenue; cold-blooded slaughter of a railway king; the assassin seized in the presence of the bleeding victim and his horror-stricken family."

People discussed this startling episode in restaurants, in saloons, at street corners and on the way home from the theaters. While men shuddered at the reported horror of the crime, there was a strong under current of sympathy for the wrongs of the miserable man who had attempted it. Had the deed been all that this sensational sheet depicted it, there would have been difficulty of convicting Tom Norwell of murder by a jury of his peers, such was the feeling which suddenly sprang up against the nefarious operations of John Ophir and his fellow conspirators.

When the papers appeared and Pipe Malley caught the words which he was to cry to attract custom, he waited for no more. He flew in hot haste up town, running the whole distance. Out of breath and exhausted he ran up the broad entrance of the Ingledee residence and rang the bell furiously. His ring had something in it which presaged important tidings. Who has not sometime in his life seen or heard the coming of a messenger whose dire errand is told before a word is spoken. It may be tidings of a great calamity, of sudden ruin, or of death. Whatever it may be, the dread event is felt in the ominous look or gait or action, or even the time of coming of the messenger. The heart sinks before the tale is told, for somehow we feel that the worst has happened. The startled servant answered the call with unusual alacrity. Pipe's excited appearance and breathless manner plainly told there was something wrong, and the servant at once asked for his message.

"I—I hain't got no messidge. I want to see Missus Ingledee."

"You can't see Mr. Ingledee. You must tell me your business."

"I got no business, I tell yer. I come to tell suthin' to her."

"To whom?"

"Why, I tole yer, to Miss Chetta Ingledee."

"Oh, *Miss* Ingledee. Well, you can't see her this time of night. I'll carry your message to her. What is it?"

"Hain't I tole you I hain't got no messidge? I must see her. It's awful important," saying which Pipe dodged inside the door.

"Hold on there, young fellow," said the man, "you can't come that game," and he seized Pipe by the arm. "Now tell your errand."

"I tell you I will see her," cried Pipe, struggling to free himself. "They'll mebbe hang him before she gits there."

Chetta having heard the violent ring at the street entrance had opened the door of her room on the second floor, expecting to receive some message. She listened, but could make out nothing till she heard Pipe's voice, and caught the last words of his speech. She ran hastily down the stairway and inquired:

"What is the matter, Pipe?" Suddenly Pipe began to realize that it might be a rather delicate affair breaking the news of her lover's danger to Miss Ingledee. In his haste he thought of nothing but reaching her as soon as possible. Now he knew the startling fact should be broken gently. He was no adept in the art of broaching a subject gradually, so blurted out only:

"It's awful!"

"What's awful, Pipe?"

"Mebbe the awfulest part's over, mebbe it isn't."

"What do you mean, Pipe?"

"I'm afraid to tell you all to onc't."

"Pipe, have you lost your senses? Tell me what's happened," she added, impatiently.

"Kin yer stand it all in a heap?"

"Something has happened to Silas," said Chetta, with a shudder.

"No, 'tain't Silas! But it's about the worstest thing I ever seed in the paper."

"Pipe, if you don't tell me at once I'll shake you." That young gentleman really did not know how to get at the subject of Norwell's disgrace, for he surmised it would be very disagreeable news to the high-spirited young lady, and he wanted to spare her all he could. But there could be no further delay. He stammered out:

"Mr. Norwell broke into Mr. Ophir's house an' nearly murdered him with a pistol an' knife, I guess, an' then got himself arrested an'—an' "—

"And what?" said Chetta, who clutched the railing hard, but never screamed, or gave any other indication of the violent emotion she felt.

"An' they chucked him inter jail." No one spoke for a brief time, and the servant eyed his mistress curiously. If this startling news affected her much she did not show it. Presently she said:

"Is that all, Pipe?"

"Well, I'd like to know if that hain't a nuff."

"I mean, have you told me all."

"Yes, I thought mebbe—mebbe you might want to know it afore you seen the papers."

"It's very kind of you, Pipe," and she slipped a coin into his hand.

"I'm very much obliged to you besides."

"Oh, it wasn't no trouble at all. I was comin' this way you see when the idear kinder struck me." With this well-intentioned little fib, Pipe took his departure.

Chetta sat down to think. Her best friend was in sore trouble, and needed help. Her first thought was one of bitter anguish at the disgrace which attached to his imprisonment like a common malefactor. A moment's reflection told her that the sufferings of the innocent can never disgrace them. But was he innocent? He had attempted to commit one of the blackest crimes in the criminal calendar. But had he not such provocation as few men could calmly submit to? Though premediated killing of a human being is always murder in the eyes of God, there are certain cases in which men, though not encouraging it, tacitly admit that it is justifiable. She loved this man, and found no difficulty in discerning his justification, especially since his attempt had proved abortive. She could, and would secure his release.

Miss Ingledee went to her father at once and laid the whole matter before him. He was greatly excited. He thought

these promiscuous attempts on human life were becoming too common. His own life might be taken any time by some disappointed man who imagined he had a grievance. He was sorry for Norwell, whom he really liked, but he thought the best thing was to let the young man suffer the consequences of his rash act.

But Chetta was not to be turned away. She pleaded the long and intimate acquaintance between the families. If friendship is worth anything it ought to be worth something in time of need, she said. Besides, Norwell had really suffered grievous wrongs, and was in a great degree excusable. Mr. Ingledee winced a little at the thought of what those wrongs were, and replied: "When a man goes into Wall street after another fellow's skin he can't complain if his own is taken." Chetta argued this was different. The Norwells were not speculators, and had been cruelly wronged. The result was that Mr. Ingledee reluctantly consented to visit Ophir and endeavor to have the prosecution dropped.

The latter gentleman on reflection had concluded next morning that a trial which might bring out prominently so many important facts, was not a pleasant prospect. He readily consented, and Mr. Ingledee that day appeared in court as a bondsman for Tom's appearance when wanted. The latter did not really know who had been instrumental in securing his release. He attributed it to the disinterested kindness of Mr. Ingledee. He thanked that gentleman with tears in his eyes. Ingledee's only reply was:

"It's of no consequence whatever. But be very careful in the future, Norwell."

Tom Norwell left the court room with a sense of shame. He was not only ruined but disgraced. He avoided his friends, for in his overwrought emotional condition he imagined they might openly shun him. He determined to leave the city of his birth where such irretrievable ruin had overtaken him. He scraped together a little money from the few available possessions remaining to him and securing a respectable home for Alice, with some friends, prepared to go to Colorado. Hickley was authorized to look after a few matters which might require attention. The lawyer kindly offered assistance, which was declined by Tom. Garmand also said in all sincerity, "When you want anything, my boy, draw on me at sight."

Tom had been corresponding for some time with Wilson

on the subject of their mutually seeking their fortunes in the land of silver. They now decided to carry their project into execution at once. Hackett had claims which Tom was not disposed to forget. It suddenly occurred to him that perhaps the feeble hunchback might grow stronger in the salubrious climate of the Rocky Mountains. He hinted as much to Little Hackett and offered to take him along. Hackett was delighted at the prospect. Aunt Rhoda and Mary consented after much anxious deliberation, and the few preparations needful were soon made.

Bidding adieu to New York, Tom and Little Hackett proceeded at once to Chicago where they were joined by Wilson. Here they all purchased tickets for Denver, and were soon speeding over the boundless prairies of the Great West. All indulged bright visions of the rich silver mines which might be discovered in the vicinity of the wonderful city of Argenta, which had risen like magic on the head waters of the Arkansas.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CITY IN THE CLOUDS.

Argenta is a city in the clouds. Let the person who dwells on the great prairies, or by the seashore, imagine himself suspended in the air at the height of just two miles, and he will have the exact elevation of this El Dorado whose untold wealth of silver for a time filled the world with wonder. It is situated in the basin of the Arkansas, though the term basin may be misleading, for the river is here but a small creek, and the basin, though comparatively level, is only a vast trough between two ranges. Gradually rising on the sides, it blends into the tops of the mountains themselves at times. On such a slope is situated Argenta, partly on level land, the outskirts of the city gradually and ambitiously extending up the hills to the very mouth of the great mines. In many cases the "dump" or debris from the mines dangerously encroaches on the buildings, so that the man who finishes and moves into his house this month, may find himself obliged to move out next month,

or be buried under a vast crawling mole of stone and dirt that grows larger and more threatening day by day.

Argenta sprang up in a day. Where before there had been only a dreary waste of snow for nine months in the year over which no living thing cared to venture there was now a bustling city of board-shanties, log-huts and an occasional tent. Twenty years before in the golden days men came by hundreds and turned the alluvial gulch into a waste of coarse gravel and stones, took out a liberal quantity of gold and departed, leaving the fabulous silver deposits under their very feet, or clogging their sluices as a troublesome waste. Argenta became at once a city of several thousand inhabitants, I will not say souls, for some of the citizens appeared never to have had any. It had two banks, two daily papers, a fire department and a calaboose.

Everybody bristled with 44-calibre revolvers, Arkansaw toothpicks and profanity. In this electrical atmosphere, under the excitement of a mad quest for silver and the aggravation incident to intimate association with the mule and the burro, plenteous oaths seemed as necessary to the overwrought emotional faculties as were bacon, flapjacks and coffee to the physical nature. In addition to the stock of classical oaths, the robust vigor of which is the peculiar heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race, new ones were coined for new occasions. As a consequence they were curt, cumbersome, or polygonal, according to the demands of the situation.

The population of Argenta was cosmopolitan in nativity, American in activity and Western in its free and easy manners. There was, in fact, a large element whose manners were perhaps, too free and easy. The city swarmed with cyprians, roughs, gamblers and adventurers of every description. A score of highly-seasoned dime novels could have been written on the spot without any perceptible diminution of material. As long as these easy-mannered but eccentric citizens confined their carousing, gambling and shooting within reasonable limits,—for such things are recognized as necessary in mining communities, and consequently have proper limits,—all was well. It was considered proper that they should occasionally paint the town red.

But when they went so far as to hold up respectable citizens in their stores in broad daylight, and politely request a loan at the point of a six-shooter, said respectable citizens, in mass meeting assembled, swore one mighty oath in unison

and said the thing should be stopped. To emphasize their decision they elevated several of the roughs a few feet from the ground in a state of suspension, notwithstanding the fact that the altitude of the locality was already considered almost too great for perfect health. Thereafter order reigned except when one gang of determined, desperate men attempted to jump some mining claim held by another gang of equally determined, equally resolute men. Then bullets flew and blood ran, but this was considered a state of affairs which necessarily accompanied the development of a rich mining region.

The climate of Argenta was by no means an agreeable one. Snow lay on the range across the Arkansas the year round, and was liable to fall in the streets of the city any day in the year. The air was raw and penetrating, in mid-summer necessitating fires at night. During the so-called summer, cold, drizzling rains or drenching showers fell for a time almost daily, to be followed sometimes by a light snow-storm which marched in ghostly columns across the desolate peaks in the distance. In the high altitudes the sun shines with great brilliancy through the thin atmosphere of a sky that is at times nearly black. His rays penetrate your thick clothing, causing a disagreeable feeling of warmth. You sit for a few moments in the shade of a spruce tree, and feel a chill creeping rapidly over you. In short, this miserable pretence of a summer is what the people of temperate climes would call very disagreeable autumn. Argenta furnished unusual inducements to the ambitious citizen who is possessed with a desire to die in his boots. If he escaped a pistol bullet, pneumonia might kill him before he could get them off. Many a stalwart, ruddy, young man came here in the flush of hope which belongs only to youth and health, seeking silver. This dread disease struck him down, and in one week he returned to his Eastern friends, who still had his kisses on their lips,—a corpse in his coffin.

In this city of the clouds arrived Tom Norwell, Arthur Wilson and Little Hackett, after having endured a three-days' stage ride over alkaline plains and one of the most difficult passes of the Rocky Mountains. They were heartily glad that their long journey from New York was ended. Little Hackett was very tired. Even the sublimity of Rocky Mountain scenery and the picturesque phases of life which were exceedingly novel to him, could not banish from his mind the

uncomfortable fact that he was very weary. This feeling was aggravated by the great altitude, which made breathing difficult. A short run of ten rods ended in exhaustion.

They went at once to the best hotel, where they paid six dollars per day for dollar-and-a-half accommodations. As their resources were limited, such an expenditure was not to be thought of for any length of time. Next day they went to a cheap lodging, intending in the language of the country to "rustle." A rustler is a man who prowls around the mountains all day long with a pick breaking rocks and scratching up the thin soil, looking for a lead. At night he comes back as tired as a galley-slave, and as hungry as an office-seeker. He mixes dough for a flapjack which, under the influence of heat, swells to an unsightly cake about an inch thick. By dint of continual turning in the skillet, he cooks this mass till it is as black as charcoal on the outside and in a condition admitting of mastication inside, though a person unfamiliar with the curiosity might take it for putty. In this same skillet he fries a liberal allowance of bacon. The aristocratic rustler has also in his culinary department a coffee-pot without a spout. It is a rare old antique, richly encrusted inside and out with the accumulated grease, grime and dirt of many years' rustling. This coating, which he looks at in the light of artistic ornament, is strengthened by hairs from his burro and lint from his blanket. He treasures this finished, rare old work of art as a smoker cherishes his meerschaum, which daily grows in ripening beauty. The absence of the spout on his cofiee-pot recalls the winter he spent in New Mexico, where it was melted off; the tow string which prevents the lid from getting lost suggests the big rush to Bonanza City, where he thought he had struck it rich. And so the very dents in the side are fraught with old memories. The rustler who happens not to be in affluent circumstances, may possess neither donkey to carry his provisions nor coffee-pot in which to brew this delicious elixir of mountain life. In the latter case he gets along just as well with an old tin can. The rustler sits on a log and devours his flapjack and bacon, washing it down with copious draughts of coffee, plentifully sweetened, and imbibed from a tin cup which is also an antique.

After supper he lights his pipe and goes to the camp of another rustler. They lie about their claims and how many capitalists they have on the string till ten o'clock, when they

go to bed. This simple operation is not attended by the preliminaries observed in genteel society. It consists in tucking his blanket closely around him as he snuggles up to the warm side of a log or some pine bushes. A few brush are between him and the twinkling stars. He sleeps soundly, but dreams at times of pockets, horses and leads with all their dips, spurs and angles.

And so the rustler prospects for years, always hoping to strike it rich, but never striking it at all, until some day he is suddenly, perhaps violently, ushered into that mysterious realm whose unknown regions are little less mysterious than his life was here.

When Norwell, Wilson and Hackett had learned by a few days' observation what a rustler really was, they modestly resolved not to aspire to his high condition. Hard as the lot of a prospector may seem, it was to be envied compared with the condition of these New Yorkers in a cheap Argenta lodging house. The best in the city was scarcely decent, but this was the most sickening, filthy, repulsive den that ever mortal man set foot in, short of a pest house. It was the resort of miners who were dead broke, and tenderfeet who, having gauged their funds by what their money would purchase at home, found to their dismay that their slender means sufficed here to pay for only the very poorest accommodations.

The miners were clad in heavy woolen shirts and the ordinary pants which they wore when they came to the country. Over these were brown duck overalls and an outer coat of the same material. The latter garments were literally glazed till they shone with grease and dirt acquired while undergoing the culinary operations of the camp, for here the male sex did the cooking, women being few, and those not of the sort that men take to their domestic altars. The strong points in favor of this homely cloth of universal use was the fact that a grease spot was about the color of the original, and when the stuff was thoroughly fortified with a coating of dirt, there was no wearing it out. Its absence invariably marked the tenderfoot who had just arrived.

The filthy beings who resorted to this lodging house had been strangers to a bath possibly for years. There were no facilities for bathing indoors, and there is not much temptation to plunge into a mountain stream which emerges from snow a mile or so above. These men were steeped in dirt till it became a part of their very natures, and excited no more

thought than it would had they been without sugar in their coffee for one meal. Yet nearly all of them had been brought up with proper regard to decency, many of them in refinement. Such is the power of association and stern necessity. They sat around the big metal stove, which was kept in full blast night and day, and squirted tobacco juice over the filthy floor and lied about their claims, that is, nearly all of them did. Occasionally a man was met who still had faint glimmerings of truth in him. Men who were so reduced in circumstances as to stay in this foul den, where the hot air reeked with tobacco, whisky and numerous unclassified evil odors, indulged in such conversation as the following:

"Jim, goin' to work yer claims this summer?"

"Only 'sessments I reckon. I kin afford to lay easy and wait. Mose, I tell you what, I've got the biggest thing this side of the range. There's the 'Horn Silver King,' that's a daisy. It's worth a hundred thousand. Then I've got an extension on it. Call that the 'Jumbo.' The 'Little Lucy' is right across the gulch. She's no slouch, and don't you forget it."

"Jim, I guess I'll not work much this summer either. What's the use? There's the 'Mountain Queen.' She'll make me a fortune and more. Was offered fifty thousand cash for her last season. Got an assay on her that was eighteen hundred an' forty last week. Wy, the ruby silver in her would make your eyes bung out. Bet yer boots there never was the like in this camp. How's that, Jim?" and he produced from a side pocket a little bit of rock about the size of a walnut.

"D—d rich stuff, Mose. Got much of it?"

"Pay streak four feet thick. Oh we've got it bigger than an elephant."

The little piece of ore was carefully returned to the pocket. It was really very rich in silver. It had been cabbaged from a paying mine owned by a New York company.

"Mose, me an' the Myers boys an' John Doubledecker is talkin' of gittin' up a big sindercate to control the whole hill, an' stock the cussed thing out and out for a million. What do you think of that?"

"I dunno. I'd ruther have a quarter of a million spot cash an' be done with the thing. But you kin bet yer life no capitalist is goin' to monkey with me. If any capitalist wants the 'Mountain Queen' at fifty thousand, or the 'Last

Chance' at forty, or the 'Rough an' Ready' at twenty-five, he kin have 'em. If he don't want 'em all he's got to do is to say so, and give some other feller a chance. Say Jim, lend me a quarter to pay for dinner? I'm expectin' a letter from Missouri to-day or to-morrow, an' I'll pay you then."

"Durn near strapped myself, Mose, but I guess I kin make it." The two bonanza kings then retire to the restaurant adjoining to fill up on baked beans, bread and coffee. On inspection the "Last Chance," the "Horn Silver King," the "Little Lucy" and the "Jumbo" would prove to be mere gopher holes in the hillsides, while the splendid pay streak four feet thick would dwindle to a little quartz seam in the rock about the thickness of a carving-knife blade. This conversation is an expurgated sample. The original is much more profusely punctuated with unique oaths and comical expressions of emphasis.

To say that Norwell, Wilson and Hackett were disgusted but poorly expresses their condition. They were sick, sick at heart, and sick at the stomach. At night when they retired things were no better, in fact worse. The rude pine bunks were arranged one above another, stateroom fashion. Sweeping and bed-making were unknown about the establishment. There was no place to sit down, no place to hang clothes. In fact, it was contrary to the custom of the country to take them off on retiring, excepting a few of the outer garments. Had they known at first of their insect bedfellows, of a species whose appearance is easily recalled by soldiers of the civil war, they would have camped under the pines at the risk of pneumonia. This dismal discovery was postponed for a few days. During the day they could not stay outside much, because of the chilling mountain air, which was positively dangerous to new comers, and particularly to a weak person like Little Hackett.

Their meals at the restaurants were simply abominable. The party unanimously agreed it would not do to squander their inadequate means by eating at the two or three fairly decent places where prices were fabulous, considering that the fare was mostly canned food. One morning they went to three restaurants before making a meal. They thought with fond regret of those places in New York where a large, delicious oyster pie can be had for fifteen cents. The discontented inner man was in a constant state of rebellion, which greatly increased the discomfort of the outer man. After all,

the kitchen is the true domestic altar, and the cook chief priest. Desecrate the altar, and happiness flees the premises. In after years Norwell and Wilson looked back upon the week spent in Argenta as the most completely and aggravatingly miserable period of their lives.

They had come to this country to prospect for silver. Argenta was the best place in which to learn all about the various mineral districts of the State, for here were miners from all quarters of the country. Hardships were necessary, and they might as well accustom themselves to the ways of this rough country at once. They talked with a great many men. Acquaintances are made here in five minutes, and comrades for the season picked up in an hour. Almost invariably these partners are true to each other. Their interests are henceforth one for life or death, sometimes the latter. After much investigation and discussion the party decided to go over the range into the famous "Gunnison Country."

During their wanderings around town Norwell one day met an expert. He had seen the man once before on the train when they entered the State. He was returning from the Black Hills "busted." For the benefit of those who may not happen to know what a mining expert is, I will say that he is a man who knows nearly as much about rocks as the Divine Providence which made them. Doubtless had he been present at the creation he could have rendered invaluable assistance in setting up the geological part of the concern. He can see clear through a mountain and tell just what is concealed in its stony bowels, that too, almost before he has left the nearest hotel. He can also see through that species of being picturesquely known in the West as a "Sucker," and he has been known to see clear through a capitalist who has wealth to plant in promising mines. His organ of sight is not less remarkable than that of the celebrated far-seer in the German legend. The expert is usually well dressed and carries a gold watch. His tongue is not so glib as that of the lightning rod peddler, nor are his remarks so definitely directed toward a visible object. He talks calmly of porphyry, shale and granite, mingling remarks about pyrites, galena, gray copper, black jack, and refractory ores till the listener is astounded at the expert's vast wisdom, and confesses to himself with shame the colossal proportions of his own ignorance.

This particular expert, whose name was John Doffmeyer, lacked the gold watch and the good clothes, but he had the

rocks in his head, if there were none in his pocket. He carelessly unfolded to Tom the nature of his mission to the mining regions. His motives were unexpectedly disinterested; for a reasonable sum he would advise miners as to the value of their property, or assist in locating new mines. His advice would save a great deal of time which might otherwise be wasted in experiments. It was cheaper to hire such a man. The shortness of the season, for snow would cover the mountains in eighty days, made time a great object with Norwell and Wilson. The latter was opposed to hiring the expert, whose greasy, seedy appearance was not prepossessing. Tom, who felt his ignorance of practical mining, was in favor of employing him. Norwell had studied the subject of geology a little at college, and this man's knowledge of rocks was good so far as he could test it by examination. The expert finally said, as he was hard up he would go on a "grub-stake." On the grub-stake plan one man furnishes everything needed for the outfit, and is entitled to a share such as may be agreed on, of all the other finds. It was settled that Doffmeyer should go on these terms.

Doffmeyer was in himself a study. He was scarcely medium height, but rather stoutly built. He wore a bleached-out, dirty-yellowish suit, which was so soiled and greasy from roughing it, that no one could discover the original color. His gray flannel shirt had no collar, and his boots were worn to the verge of extinction. He had a lusterless gray eye, very light frizzy side whiskers, pug nose, large mouth stained constantly with tobacco, and greasy complexion. The latter would probably have had a natural healthy color under the effect of soap and water. He wore a cheap silver watch and a charm consisting of a little compass dangled from the brass chain. This compass would prove of great service should he get lost while prosecuting his wonderful discoveries in the mountains. He had an appetite like a mill saw, as Tom soon discovered to his cost, and proved as lazy as a fat dog on a hot August noon. Altogether, he was a unique specimen, even for that country, so rich in biped curiosities.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROUGHING IT.

Heartily sick of Argenta, the party decided to go to the little town of Buena Alta, some sixty miles distant, and outfit there, preparatory to crossing the divide into the Gunnison country. Buena Alta was a bustling place. It had sprung up like a mushroom as soon as the railroad reached that point. Perhaps it might disappear as suddenly when the terminus of the road moved on, leaving only an extended debris of old tin cans, gunny sacks, and shank bones of hams to mark its site. Nearly all the houses were made of rough spruce boards. The more pretentious were lined and ceiled with white cotton cloth. Many of the inhabitants, like the Arab, were abiding in tents. Everybody owned from one to twenty mines, as they termed their claims, most of which had no ore, many no work done of any consequence, some only a stake sticking in a vast expanse of snow. They talked of mines as an Eastern man might mention how many pairs of shoes he had.

This was a country of boundless wealth, though nobody seemed to be burdened with a surplus of ready cash. In fact, his cash was the most attractive thing about a tenderfoot, as the new comers were called. Straightway the men of experience who had graduated in the ways of the country laid plans to relieve the confiding tenderfoot of his wealth. Usually the plan pursued was to sell him dilapidated old tents, skinny donkeys or worthless mining claims, once possessed of which no ray of happiness again cheered the miserable man till they were got rid of, which usually happened by abandonment, when the tenderfoot turned his disheartened steps eastward to bid the infernal country a last adieu. Often however, one of nature's real noblemen, who has too much regard for the feelings of a fellow being to cheat him deliberately, "held up" the unsuspecting tenderfoot at the point of a "44" six-shooter, kindly relieved him of his purse and watch, and courteously requested him "to make tracks." The tracks

were made with dispatch toward the most frequented part of the town.

Norwell and Wilson purchased a tent, a pick and a shovel, a drill, some giant powder, which was in greasy sticks about the size of a candle and covered with waterproof paper, some fuse and percussion caps, a hammer, and other lesser prospecting requisites. For the commissary department they bought flour, meal, bacon, rice, coffee, sugar, dried apples and peaches, a gallon of maple syrup, several cans of jellies and butters, with other small articles which they considered necessaries. A portable sheet-iron stove with pans for baking, a frying-pan, sauce-pan, coffee-pot, knives and forks, etc., completed the culinary department. They had stuff enough to start a small kitchen in full running order. The expert viewed these preparations with great satisfaction. He had evidently struck a "snap." A rustler would have started out afoot with ten pounds of flour, ten of bacon, two pounds of coffee, a spider, a pick, and a blanket.

To carry all these manifold possessions they had purchased three burros, after much inspection and bargaining. Buying a donkey is very much like the legendary transaction of buying a pig in a poke. There is no use haggling. One donkey is as good as another if he is as big. No living man can tell his age within half a lifetime. The burro himself seems indifferent on this point, and though his melodious voice is often lifted up in song, he has never been known to warble "Darling, I am growing old." What becomes of all the donkeys is as hard to answer as the time-honored conundrum what becomes of all the pins. The oldest inhabitant with his tenacious memory and fertile imagination never saw one die a natural death. Their worst foe is the heavy snow of a Rocky Mountain winter when the valleys are covered deeply. Horses, mules and donkeys are turned out to rustle. The horse, with superior sagacity and strength, paws through the snow to the coarse grass and manages to keep off starvation. The miserable burro mopes and dies a lingering death, cut off from grass, old gunny sacks and bacon rinds, all of which he devours with zest.

Of the animals purchased one was a large jack with long gray hair, and a temper slightly soured by contact with an unfeeling world. Another was an old brown, Mexican jack. He looked not unlike a mummy, and if appearances went for anything, must have made his advent into this world away

back toward the time of the conquest of his native country by Cortez. The third was a little female about the size of a large Newfoundland dog. The three with their pack saddles were bought for eighty dollars, and the owner, who was a physician, kindly threw in a prescription for the cure of mountain fever.

The animals were driven round to be packed. There was outfit enough to load a two-horse wagon for the mountain road. It made an appalling bulk compared with the diminutive beasts that were to carry it over the range. Packing a burro is in itself the triumph of the prospector's profession. A tenderfoot can no more do it well the first time, than he could dance a Highland fling on a tight rope without practice. It is easy enough after a few trials to sling a sack of flour on one side of the saddle, which exactly resembles a saw buck, and a sack of bacon on the other side. But when it comes to slinging on top of that a sheet-iron stove and several joints of pipe, some bread-pans, a deep sauce-pan with a long handle, a coffee-pot with a big bail, a spider that objects to fitting in anywhere, a pick the shape of a rainbow, a shovel, a drill which is liable to slip out suddenly and chop off some of the operator's toes, a gunny sack full of fruit cans that seems to weigh half a ton as you lift it to the very middle of the load, a roll of blankets, a tent, a tent pole with a vicious iron gudgeon in the end of it, and various other little camp trinkets—I repeat when an attempt is made to pack all these on an impatient little animal, who realizes that he has fallen among philistines, the effort is liable to suggest that there is a limit to human achievement. It is possible to get your cargo aboard; but it must be packed and sinched till it will ride all day, up hill and down, follow the donkey as he jumps a mudhole all fours, stay by him when he runs under a scraggy tree, brushes a pointed rock, or toils up a steep angle in the mountain trail.

The packing was begun and during its continuance sundry reflections were made from time to time, some of them philosophic in their nature, while others were disconnected and rambled from any well-defined subject. But what was lacking in logic was more than made up by vigor of declamation. The donkeys shifted and stepped continually as their burden grew to surprising proportions. This animal can carry an immense load considering his size, but he dislikes to do it. The despised donkey is much misunderstood in this

country. He is not vicious. He very rarely kicks or bites. He endures every hardship patiently and will submit to shameful abuse without an attempt to resent it. The loads after much changing, tying and untying, shifting and adjusting, were finally thought to be in place, tied by a gordian knot of small rope. Then it was discovered that the can of maple syrup had been forgotten. Tom tied it by a string to the side of one of the loads and exclaimed triumphantly:

"There, Wilson, I'll bet my hat that'll ride. Get up, Jerry."

Jerry, who doubtless marveled greatly at the unusual time consumed in packing, got up with alacrity. The donkey, in this respect, sets a useful example to man. He starts the instant the packing is completed. Jerry proceeded about two rods when the gunny sack full of canned food gave a lurch to leeward and pulled all the rest after it. The load strewed the ground or hung suspended beneath the animal,—the saddle having turned for want of sufficient sinching, as the operation of girthing is called. Fortunately Jerry was the staid old Mexican who never gave way to excitement. He stopped and waited to be packed again.

In course of time another start was made. Pretty soon the stove pipe slipped out of the rope which tied it. More delay. After another very transient bit of locomotion, the pick slipped down, and began to excavate among the ribs of the unfortunate donkey; then the coffee-pot endangered its usefulness by bumping against the stove; next the cork came out of the maple syrup can, and that savory compound trickled over everything, sticking together the long hair of the burro. Some time elapsed before anything else happened, and a mile or two began to establish a delusive confidence. Before long it was discovered that the pick had all the while been surreptitiously boring a hole in the bottom of the coffee-pot. An old gunny sack was inserted to keep the peace. Another short move and one of the burros began to exhibit signs of dissatisfaction at existing arrangements. The stove had settled down till the sharp iron corner jobbed him in the back at every step. Another gunny sack was inserted. By and by the load of the gray jack with the defective temper began to get out of balance, and the uneasy animal tacked to one side of the road, as if he contemplated climbing a tree. Such a load, once unbalanced, can never be righted short of removal. It was useless to hang first the sledge-hammer,

then the drill on the light side. Apparently another donkey hung there would have availed nothing. It must all be repacked, which consumed at least one hour's valuable time.

And so the weary day is consumed, slowly climbing higher up the mountain road, following a noisy, spluttering tributary of the Arkansas. At night the weary men and animals are only too glad to shelter in some quiet dell shaded by dark and gloomy pines, where a crystal mountain stream gurgles among the rocks. The camp-fire burns cheerily, and is very grateful in that chill mountain air. The bacon is soon fried, biscuits baked, black, strong coffee made, and an appetite such as the city man has no conception of, gives a zest to this homely fare, which makes it taste better than the daintiest viands. After supper stories are told. If there is a camp liar along, as there usually is, he does his fine work at this time. Doffmeyer told marvelous stories of the Black Hills and Utah. Little Hackett, to whom the freshness of nature and the grandeur of the scenery was a never-ending delight, discovered new beauties with each mile of progress up the wild glens of the Rockies.

On they journeyed, day by day, up the little creek into the thin air of the highest altitudes. Breathing grew difficult. The cottonwoods disappeared, and only the hardy evergreen timber was to be seen. Then they passed the timber line, and some of the highest peaks in the United States lifted their storm-beaten, granite heads in silent majesty above the clouds. They were crossing the Cottonwood Pass. I remember reading of mountain passes when a boy. My childish conception was that a pass was a level open way, as smooth as a turnpike, and about as wide. I also remember that the Rocky Mountains were depicted on the map by a winding dotted line which gave an impression that they attained considerable elevation. I supposed this stupendous system to be a winding ridge, something like a railroad fill, only on a magnificent scale. O geography, how delusive are thy teachings to the mind of childhood, when not supplemented by a skillful teacher! A mountain pass is usually simply a place where it is possible to climb over at all. The Rocky Mountain system, instead of one petty ridge, has a width of hundreds of miles, with range after range, peak beyond peak, open valleys, yawning canyons, and solitary buttes, scattered in wild confusion. Perhaps many of our opinions of mature years would be found as imperfect as the

child's notions of geography if we only took the trouble to find out by a little thinking. Man is an animal who thinks under protest.

Each day the travelers grew a little more footsore and weary. Each day the task of packing the animals became a little easier. Each day hope rose higher as the party approached the end of their journey,—the silver-ribbed mountains where treasure awaited them, though to most miners it proves as fleeting as the bags of gold which, as a child, I was told lay concealed beneath the ends of every rainbow.

The only incident which might have proved of importance was a fire in camp. It was on Slate River, a clear, rushing tributary of the Gunnison. Norwell rose first, and stepped out of the little tent into the clear, frosty, mountain air. Though it was July, the temperature was below the freezing point, and the mud along the water's edge had a thin crust frozen over it in places. Norwell was cook for the party, Wilson attended the donkeys, and Doffmeyer got wood and water. The tent was pitched beside a little clump of cottonwood trees. Norwell thought that a bright fire would add greatly to the comfort of the situation. Thoughtlessly he struck a lighted match into the dry trunk of a prostrate and decaying cottonwood. Soon a genial blaze sprang into the air, snapping and crackling among the brushwood, and creeping forward almost like a thing of life. Tom cried out, "Get up, boys," for the fire was very near the tent.

In this dry, electric atmosphere everything burns. Green grass, green brushwood, even the green leaves on the trees, burn viciously as they will nowhere else. Many an unfortunate camper has lost his little outfit in some lonely mountain gulch by a fire which was thus carelessly started by himself or another. In some cases the loss of property is not the worst, and only blackened corpses, with the iron utensils of the outfit, mark the scene of the dreadful disaster. The fire will climb and seethe and crackle and roar around naked cliffs, where there is apparently next thing to nothing for it to feed upon, all the while emitting dense volumes of suffocating smoke, pungent with the burning gum of the pine and spruce. It will climb to the very top of a lofty pine tree, transforming it into a flaming pillar of fire.

At length Tom began to be alarmed for the safety of the tent. The fire, not satisfied with licking up everything on the ground, was climbing to the very tops of the green cottonwood trees

twenty-five to thirty feet high, and wrapping them in flames which emitted dense volumes of whitish, steam-like smoke. Wilson and Little Hackett were dressing. The Expert was still in bed, wrapped in his blankets. He was always the last man up, but managed to strike a good average in promptitude by being first at the table. The fire gave one mighty swoop, engulfed the trees only a few feet from the tent, and showered down sparks all over the flimsy cloth structure, setting it on fire in a dozen places.

Wilson and Norwell, fully realizing the danger, with a few jerks wrenched the tent pegs from the sandy soil, and dragged the tent to a place of safety on the prairie. The Expert, who now thought it advisable to rise at once, was left *en dishabille* shivering in the cold mountain air. Seizing a blanket, he enveloped his scientific person in it, grabbed his clothing, and fled to the prairie to complete his toilet.

By strenuous exertions everything was saved, though the fine new blankets had little holes burned in them, and the tent was rather liberally supplied with air holes about the size of bullet holes, through which the rain afterward dripped dismally, as a constant reminder of the exciting episode on Slate River. It was a narrow escape from a serious disaster, for in that remote region it would have been utterly impossible to replace the outfit.

The hardships of this rough life told severely on Little Hackett. In a few days he was taken with mountain fever. In many cases this disease greatly resembles certain forms of fever and ague. The poor hunchback, with pale face and "goose-flesh," shivered over the roaring camp fire, the very picture of abject misery. He was burning up in his vitals and freezing at his extremities. His head seemed ready to burst from the combined effects of the altitude, the disease and the quinine which he took every hour. When nature made a supreme effort to throw off the disorder there was an uncomfortable flushing which in a vigorous constitution would have been fever. This was followed by a reaction in which the sufferer shivered in a way that was pitiable to see. An herb grew in the mountains, which was a sovereign remedy, but they were not certain just what it was, and so administered the world-wide remedy, quinine. They had little hopes of his recovery, and camped for a while to see if rest would enable him to cope with this formidable disease. To their great joy he was perfectly well in a few days, and felt better

than before. After a toilsome tramp of ten days, which a rustler would have made in five, the party plodded wearily, late one Saturday afternoon, into the little mining town of Ruby Buttes, situated in the Elk Mountains.

Ruby Buttes had many attractions for the miner. It certainly had none for the tourist or the person who was unwilling to dispense with the most ordinary comforts of life. The straggling town lay in a rough mountain gulch over ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. This gulch was little else than a vast stone pile covered thinly with soil. The main street ran up the center of this great mountain hollow. On either side the ascent soon terminated in the abrupt steeps of the mountains, whose sides had been covered with a heavy growth of stately spruce timber. These magnificent trees sprang into the air as straight as a ruler, the slender tufted tops waving gracefully in the mountain breezes. Most of the timber had now fallen before the ruthless axe of the miner. The American seems to have an instinctive enmity to trees. His heart pulses with delight to see a lofty monarch of the forest fall before the axe. If he does not wish to use a tree he often cuts it down merely for the sake of destroying it. This blind and senseless waste is about to result in a timber famine.

The houses were built of logs or spruce boards. The log houses were covered with dirt which made an excellent roof in this climate. Split logs were first laid on as the sub-structure, then spruce trees were peeled to the height conveniently reached by a man, and the bark laid on somewhat like shingles to prevent leaks. Over this was thrown about a foot of dirt carefully beaten down. Such a roof would withstand heavy rains with few leaks. Some buildings of considerable size consisted merely of a framework of scantling over which was tacked for roof and sides white cotton cloth forming a gigantic tent. Some still lived in small tents. In the mining district of Ruby Buttes were gathered twenty-five hundred miners who were literally honeycombing the hills in the mad quest for silver. Gambling shops and dance halls were in full blast. There were several stores, and a smelter was about to open.

Norwell, Wilson and Hackett spent the next day, which was Sunday, looking around town and mingling with the miners to pick up "pointers." They knew it to be Sunday by the reckoning in their diaries. There were no other visible

signs which indicated the fact. The second commandment, along with several others, does not penetrate to a mining camp until sometime has elapsed after location. In fact, it never seems to become fully naturalized, but always appears to be on the point of migrating to more congenial climes.

The prospects revealed by inquiry were not encouraging. As they neared the place forlorn, greasy miners on foot or horseback met them with doleful tales of snow, hunger and privation. But what was worst of all was the fact that little silver had been seen. Hundreds remained in camp, who had spent their last dollar and eaten almost their last bite of "grub." They must either await remittances from the East, or go to work as common laborers in the mines. It is hard for a man to swing the pick when he imagines himself worth a hundred thousand dollars. These ragged, hungry men clung desperately to their claims, each one deluding himself with the belief that his were a little better than the average, and that somehow he would strike it rich if others did not.

The mining fever is a mania, a delusion, a persistent nightmare, which deprives its victim of reason. It drives him on to endure rain, snow, hunger, exhausting toil, danger to life and limb. For what? Disappointment and the delusive hope that just over the range is a new camp where he is sure to strike it rich. He is gambling in probabilities, with the chances, a thousand to one against him, while he daringly stakes life, health, happiness. It is a passion which takes complete possession of its unhappy victim to leave him broken and penniless in old age. Like the fascination of gambling or the degrading spell of drink, it drives on its wandering victim with a remorseless whip of ungratified desire. Like his fellow-slave of the more universal vices, the disappointed prospector knows that he is not wise. But he has left friends in the East to make a fortune in the wilds of the West. Pride spurs him on. He will never go back poor. One in a thousand makes a strike. Of these a large proportion squander their lucky prizes in gambling, or further prospecting; and of the remainder the majority have acquired habits which render them unfit to enjoy refined society. Fortunately it is a mania confined to a limited number of persons, and which will, with the settlement of the country, finally disappear.

The camp of Ruby Buttes, which in anticipation promised so well, in realization was a fraud. There was really only one first-class mine, the great "Ruby Queen." This magnificent

claim, situated partly within the village limits, had paid a large profit from the very first of the working. Massive deposits of ruby silver, that ran one thousand ounces to the ton, were found at the very surface. In a few months the mine was worth a million dollars, and not for sale. As an instance of pure luck, it may be added, according to traditions of the place, that one of the original owners got his share for assisting a stranger out of the mud with his team. In grateful remembrance of this favor, the prospector placed the stranger's name on the first stake he set. That stake held the great Ruby Queen. The jubilant owners sold too soon and realized only forty thousand dollars for what in three months was held at a million. Another example of miners' luck, or want of it.

The New Yorkers had come, meaning business, and determined to do something in spite of the discouraging outlook. They found the entire country staked. They could not ramble about the mountains anywhere without coming across a stake, which read nearly as follows:

"We, the undersigned, claim fifteen hundred feet on this lead, fifteen degrees east of north by fifteen west of south, extending seven hundred and fifty feet on each side of the discovery stake, with all dips, spurs and angles.

"[Signed] JACK WIGGINS,
JIM HIGGINS."

Everything was staked up the mountain sides to the very clouds, and above the clouds in some instances. The only wonder was that the clouds were not staked, too, as the mountain lakes really were. Some miners had ten to twenty claims, while they worked none as the law required. Norwell and Wilson soon found that nothing worth having remained vacant. Their only chance to secure a claim was to work one for an interest. There were two Germans, brothers, who had five or six claims, but were too lazy to work them. They proposed to let Norwell's party have an interest in one, provided the latter would perform the one hundred dollars' worth of work required annually on each mining claim. The Stengel brothers proposed to give half. Tom urged that, as there would be six in the party, all should share equally, and each have a sixth. Then his party should get four-sixths instead of one-half.

"Vel, dot's all right," said Herman Stengel. "You kits four-sixths oont Bob oont me kits four-sixths." After much

explanation, backing out of the bargain and again agreeing, it finally dawned on the Dutchman's intellect that four-sixths left only two-sixths for him and Bob, so the bargain was completed, and the New Yorkers were mine owners.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRIKING IT RICH.

Wilson and Norwell now made active preparations to begin work at once on the Bismarck, as the Germans had patriotically named the claim. Hackett would not be able to work in the shaft, but could render valuable aid in cooking and going errands to town. Doffmeyer was to train the far-seeing eye of science on the rocks, advise about the best means of working, do a little prospecting and a good deal of genteel loafing. The first thing to be done was to move their camp to the top of the mountain near the claim. There a site was selected for the tent by the side of a mountain lake, amid the majestic spruces which clothed the hillside. When they got fairly settled they would build a cabin to live in. Off to the northwest the great Ruby Peak pierced the very clouds, and sometimes showed a covering of fresh snow after an August rain. To the east was the great round dome of Mount Carbon. The Germans moved to the same spot for the sake of company. Everything was now ready to go to work.

The Germans in their generosity had sold the new comers another claim on the same conditions as the Bismarck. It was decided to work this second first, as it was much closer to camp than the Bismarck. The party were in high spirits. They had been in camp only a week and already had an interest in two good claims. They were as well off as the Germans who had tramped over the pass in April, carrying their blankets and provisions, on snow shoes. These pioneers had endured unparalleled hardships. The flour which the Stengels carried in on their backs would have sold readily in Ruby Buttes at twenty-seven cents per pound.

On Monday morning the New Yorkers began work on their claim. A huge fragment of rock literally ribbed with galena projected from the mountain side. Galena is a very

seductive ore. Its regular cubes and fresh silvery appearance make it very attractive to the tenderfoot. He can see for himself that he has some kind of mineral beyond question. Most kinds of ores, and many of the very richest, furnish to the unpracticed eye no more indications of precious metals than may be seen in a brick. But the man who strikes galena has something he can see in large masses. There is nothing stingy about it—at least in the quantity of lead. It may contain twenty per cent. silver, perhaps not one per cent. The Expert, after careful examination and much hammering of pieces, decided it a good thing and predicted a body of it. This was highly satisfactory information. Norwell and Wilson went to work with a will picking down the rock. Doffmeyer cut some logs in a lazy, half-hearted way, and leveled off a spot on which to sort ore. He grunted continually while engaged in labor. Work was to him a refined species of torture. He could pick an hour at a quart of rock. Norwell, whose buoyant nature, unused to disappointment, always viewed things in the rosiest aspect, predicted that the donkeys would be needed before the end of the week to pack ore down the mountain to the smelter.

They blasted off a portion of the huge rock and dug around the projecting part. Somehow it did not seem to widen out in the ground as was necessary to constitute a part of the "country rock," as the prevailing formation was called. Still the Expert kept on sorting the ore, which he arranged with artistic taste in a neat little pyramid. Wilson's thoughts that night when they quit work were possessed with a dire foreboding. He was afraid the rock would not hold out. This may seem a groundless fear in a country where the mountains were all made of solid, everlasting stone. Next day they renewed their work with undiminished vigor. They were determined to find something in that big rock or expose its miserable pretensions. A final shot did the work. A stick of powder sent the huge boulder flying down the mountain in a score of pieces, and left what?—a big hole in the hillside. They sat a few moments in silence, then a hearty laugh followed at the sudden destruction of their mine by an overcharge of powder. Norwell exclaimed:

"Well, boys, this is a funny country. Even nature puts up a job on the tenderfoot." Wilson, with a face as grave as a deacon's, inquired of Doffmeyer whether they had better move the ore dump down to the present location of the mine, or attempt to bring back the mine to the ore dump.

"What are the indications now, Doffmeyer?" said Norwell.

"Gentlemen, I tell you no man can see plumb through a rock. But that's mighty rich stuff, and if it had held out we'd been heeled." There was no disputing logic like this, but had he taken the pains to walk up the gulch a mile he could have seen the very cliffs whence some ancient glacier had torn this huge fragment in past ages. But he preferred to work by theory, like the two geniuses who spent half a day discussing whether hot water would ignite gunpowder. In mining regions hopes are laid to rest with great facility and dispatch. It only remained now to try the Bismarck lode.

The Bismarck had one very strong point in its favor. There was no danger of blowing the rock all away at once. It was situated on the side of an exposed granite cliff, whose walls were like iron. A lonesome crooked stake announced that the Stengels had located the claim May 28. A blaze on a spruce tree had been added as a precautionary measure to enable them to find their precious possession again. The melting snow had in a little more than a month left this blaze ten feet up the tree. Why any human being should claim any part of that lonely mountain side, or even take it as a gift, was not very apparent. Silver was the magic talisman which had given that little crooked stick, in this lonely spot on this bare granite mountain side, an importance that might rival the title deeds to a block on Fifth Avenue. The party scrambled slowly up the precipitous slope to the Bismarck.

Two days' hard labor by men, one of whom had done no work for years, the other never, began to tell on them. Norwell and Wilson could scarcely move a muscle that did not respond by a thrill of pain more or less acute. Their arms were as sore as if they had been beaten, and their legs almost refused to propel their bodies, which literally had to be pushed up the hill. The great altitude rendered breathing difficult, and at times caused a feeling of exhaustion so complete and overpowering that the weary toiler dropped on the cold rock to snatch a brief rest.

The Expert held an inquest first. He picked off little bits of rock and carefully examined them under a microscope. He set his compass and traced the course of the seams in the rock. He took a liberal chew of tobacco and scratched the rock with a pocket knife. Finally he decided that the indications were

not so bad after all, but they should have to cut for the vein. Now cutting for a vein slightly resembles cutting the haystack for a needle. By means of a good hay knife, backed by muscle, you may readily cut the haystack in two, but there is a possibility that you may miss the needle. So you may tunnel into a mountain a mile in a mineral country and not strike a single vein. A brick yard would have shown as much indication of a silver vein as did the Bismarck lode. But others were boring the mountain full of holes on every side of them, and this was about as good a place to dig as any. Wilson humorously suggested one valuable feature of the location. It had a splendid dump, for the dirt and rocks went rattling down the steep mountain hundreds of feet toward the little creek, till in the far distance they seemed like little brown animals leaping along the ground.

They picked, shoveled, drilled and blasted in that flinty granite, which seemed as tough as steel. Giant powder was the only agent which accomplished much. That shivered and tore the rocks into thin slabs like cord wood. These pieces were often wedged in, and for some inexplicable reason the big end of the wedge always seemed anchored down in the rock. It was a task of unremitting, arduous labor, which seemed to accomplish little or nothing. Norwell, who had never done a day's manual labor in his life, suffered severely. Only his indomitable pluck sustained him. Wilson, who had often swung an axe or handled the shovel on the farm, soon dropped into the old swing of the arm, and performed more labor than his partner with much less effort. Tom never could acquire this steadiness and unerring aim which enabled Wilson to hit a drill head every time with telling effect, and his muscles ached as if they would crack.

The raw air and the alkaline water caused his hands to chap till they opened on the knuckles in ugly seams which oozed blood constantly under the jarring of the hammer on the drill. The most effectual remedy for this painful trouble consisted in dipping a dry spruce splinter into pork fat, holding it in a candle flame till it took fire, then dexterously dropping the boiling grease into the gaping wound. He secretly cursed the country for the first two or three weeks, and resolved that if he ever saw civilization alive, he would drive a scavenger's cart before he would again engage in mining.

Ten days found them into the rock less than ten feet, and still the same ugly gray granite with whitish spots, which

looked like the spots in "head cheese." The time of the Expert was too valuable for him to swing the sledge for any protracted period, so he spent a great deal of it looking at the rocks. By much scraping and searching he finally obtained a little fragment which had a spot in it about the size of a pin head, where the beautiful wine-colored flash of the ruby was visible. The discovery of ruby silver in this camp always created a sensation. The mercury in the thermometer of hope soared skyward at once. Everybody went to work with a will. It was decided to enlarge the shaft. When the top soil was removed on one side for this purpose a sight was presented that made their hearts fairly leap. There exposed to full view was a vein of blackish quartz nearly two feet thick. The Expert had been squatting over the place for ten days in utter ignorance of the location of this attractive streak of crystal rock that promised such a rich reward for their labors.

Only the man who has experienced the wild thrill of delight that pervades every fiber of him who discovers a new mine, can realize the feelings of the party. Volumes have been written about the raptures of first love, but there is a sort of let-me-shout sensation about a great mineral discovery that lays first love completely in the shade. When a wealthy but respected relative dies, the favored heir who is the recipient of a handsome legacy is glad, but not with this kind of joy. The woman who swept till she found the piece of silver was glad, but not with this thrilling joy. The heir simply gets something long expected, to the woman is restored what was once her own, leaving her no better off than before.

The seeker for precious metals on the contrary, dares not let his hope ripen into expectancy. His quest is continually shrouded by an air of romance, which attaches to the wild regions he visits, and their unknown recesses of mountain vale and canyon. He often endures the dangers of a soldier, combined with the feverish excitement of the gambler. He counts for little or nothing adventures with wild beasts, wilder men, or the perils of nature. Deeds of daring that would put to shame the stilted exploits of chivalry, are to him only incidents in his adopted calling. Is it strange then, when he has finally struck it rich, that the rushing, tingling, tide of joy should swell higher in proportion to the uncertain nature of his prospects? Then his good fortune at once yields great

benefits. In the wealthy East rich men are so common as to excite no remark. But among poor miners who have delved for gold by day, and dreamed of it by night for a score or so of years, the lucky winner of a great prize is at once apotheosized. His standing in society is fixed beyond question. He is a man of consideration. A feeling of respect exists for him something akin to that felt in Mohammedan countries toward the pious devotee who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Though Tom Norwell, Arthur Wilson, and Little Hackett were new at the business, a man is never too new to feel in full force this intoxicating thrill of exaltation.

With an ardor which scarcely knew fatigue they attacked this flinty ledge of quartz as if it had been a bar that separated them from sweet freedom. For the benefit of the reader whose education in respect to mining affairs has been overlooked, I will say that quartz veins may be compared with great planks set into the ground edgewise. They extend to unknown depths, but usually their length on or near the surface is not great, seldom reaching more than a mile in the longest and only a few hundred yards in the smaller. As this flinty strip is firmly bound by the rocks adjoining the vein, and the whole inserted between wall rock as firmly as if it had grown there, which it possibly did, sinking on a vein is very slow, laborious, and expensive work. Paying ore is seldom near the surface. It requires large capital to work a mine, and thus the impoverished miner often loses a rich find from sheer inability to get deep enough to see what he has.

That night the boys went home very tired, but in capital spirits. They were thoroughly satisfied with the situation. One source of uneasiness however, remained. Little Hackett did not improve in health as had been confidently expected. The dry, exhilarating, electric air seemed to excite his nerves, while the depressing chill of such an altitude, stimulated nature to keep up the fires of the body to meet the increased demand for warmth. A robust person with an excess of fat improves at once under such conditions. Poor Little Hackett's puny frame and feeble powers must soon succumb. Hackett had gone down to the town to purchase powder and other necessary supplies. Both Norwell and Wilson felt uneasy about his condition, but Tom, who had suggested his coming to the country, was particularly worried. He had been the means of losing the boy's money—was that flickering life to be charged to his account too?

"Arthur, what do you think of Hackett?" Tom felt that he could refrain no longer from mentioning what now recurred to his mind again and again.

"He doesn't seem to mend as he ought to. We must not overtax him."

"I'm sorry that we sent him down town for those things. That's a hard climb on the hill."

"Tom, I don't think that will hurt him. He must keep moving. It isn't safe to sit around in this chilly climate."

"Wilson, I'll do the cooking hereafter, and rest Hackett."

"No you wont."

"Why not?"

"I thought we were to share and share alike?"

"So we were. I'm not talking about profits."

"Mining law, the world over, is share gains, share pains. If he isn't able to do his work, Doffmeyer and I will take our turns at it." Had the Expert been present he might have put a different interpretation on mining law, for his intolerable laziness made it difficult for him to perform the part already assigned him.

They ate in the open air. A large spruce tree had fallen across a prostrate fellow and broken square in two. At this junction a flat pine box did duty as a table. The logs served for seats, and each man placed his plate on his knees helping himself from the bacon in the spider, or the stewed fruit or rice in the sauce-kettle. It was a very sociable arrangement, and not at all inconvenient. Two shaggy little spruce trees the height of a man, served as a kitchen. Under them were placed the dishes and any food remaining; on them hung the towels. At supper time Tom inquired:

"Hackett, how did you find the hill?"

"Awful steep. It just takes my breath clear away. I had to stop every two rods to rest. Somehow I can't climb as you fellows can."

"Oh, you'll get used to that. I was the same way at first," said Doffmeyer.

"But I get no better. Sometimes I feel so weak that I just have to stop and sit right down. Then sometimes I feel splendid."

"Maybe you had better not go down the hill any more," said Tom.

"Oh, I couldn't do without letters. Got one from Mary to-day, and she wishes to be remembered."

"Thanks. If you would rather work round the camp I'll go after your letters." Tom made this remark as a delicate feeler. He knew that Hackett would loathe the idea of becoming a mere feeder on the bounty of his friends.

"Oh, I can stand going errands. I like it."

"I'll tell you what you need, Hackett," said Doffmeyer. "Eat more. You don't eat half enough. Take a big chunk of bacon and plenty of beans. Nothing like bacon and coffee in the mountains." So saying, he reached to the coffee-pot, poured out a third cup, put into it several heaping spoons of sugar, walked to the tent, took out a can of plum butter, helped himself to a plateful, sat down, took another big biscuit, and a fresh start. Norwell had for some time been utterly disgusted with the Expert's laziness and selfishness, but the deliberate piggishness of his appropriating a luxury which the others had not shared aroused in the minds of the other three a feeling of ill-disguised contempt. But Norwell was too sensitive a gentleman to make any remarks about what another ate. Wilson was a person of a very different stamp. His rugged sense of manliness and propriety would not allow him to overlook so contemptible an act.

"John, it strikes me you are getting harder to please than when we first met you."

"Why?" asked the Expert, his mouth full of biscuit and plum butter.

"You can't get along with one kind of sauce, when the rest of us can make a meal without any."

Not another word was said, but a spark was blown which might kindle a dangerous flame in so small a community. Norwell and Wilson decided that possibly different food might be better for Hackett. None of the party had tasted butter or potatoes for six weeks. There was little doubt that the Bismarck would prove a big thing, and repay them well for all expenditures. They decided to buy some butter and potatoes at once. Potatoes were only twenty cents a pound, and a shriveled article at that. Ranch butter was one dollar per pound, creamery butter seventy-five cents. Ranch eggs were seventy-five cents per dozen, hay one hundred dollars per ton, and other things in proportion.

With light hearts they worked early and late on the Bismarck. The Stengels came every day to see the prospect. They made no attempt to conceal their boyish delight at their good fortune. The whole party agreed that it was best

to keep quiet about the claim until they knew just what they had and till the claim was surveyed and recorded according to law. In new mining camps it is often positively dangerous for one man to hold a rich claim; it may be hazardous even for a party. Ruby silver had been discovered in the pay streak in rich masses, and in this camp the very name ruby was enough to set men wild with excitement and envy. The Dutchmen often resorted to town, to indulge in the cheering fluids which miners frequently employ to keep their spirits at high tide. Under the stimulus of Rocky Mountain whisky no wonder that they left their senses behind. They boasted around town of their big strike, exaggerating greatly the importance of what was as yet only an excellent prospect.

Every report of a big strike creates a great sensation in a mining camp. Men flocked to see it by the hundreds, just as in civilized communities they flock to see a circus. The hill was soon overrun with people looking for the Bismarck lode. There were men on foot and on horseback, men with repeating rifles and unarmed men, honest men and villains who would cut a throat for ten dollars. All this greatly annoyed Norwell and Wilson, for they saw in it a source of danger.

CHAPTER XX.

JUMPERS.

The miners who first locate a new camp have always enjoyed the right of making certain local regulations concerning the size of claims and other mining rights. These regulations are recognized by the statutes of the United States as having the force of duly enacted laws. Miners are a law to themselves. Even so have the individuals who comprise these rude communities taken the disposition of the Sabbath out of the hands of the Deity, where it is usually allowed properly to belong, and regulated it by a species of miners' common law, which is more in accordance with the miner's view of the fitness of things. Were this unwritten law formulated, it might read something as follows: Six days shalt thou labor on thy claim diligently with pick, shovel and drill, taking turns with thy partner at the windlass. But the

seventh day is peculiarly thine own. On that day thou shalt wash thy shirts, mend thy overalls and anchor new buttons thereon. Thou shalt also replenish thy stock of powder, get thy drills sharpened, compare thy rock with that of thy neighbor's claim, examine thy stakes to see that no enemy hath removed them, and in all things prepare thyself so that the labors of the week may not be interrupted.

Norwell and Wilson found little difficulty in adopting this code. In new communities there is a sort of moral stay of proceedings, which enables the consciences of most men to take a breathing spell. Little Hackett and the Expert had gone out to look at the lake, whose crystal waters reflected an image as delicately true as that of the finest plate-glass mirror. There were no fish in its waters, but they were plentifully stocked on the shallow margins with a species of homely lizard, vulgarly known in some parts of the country as the "mud puppy."

The clear hot rays of a July sun poured down through the somber foliage of the tall spruce trees. The snow was gone nearly everywhere except from the big peak across the lake, where it was eternal, so far as man was concerned. With the snow, the noisy little brooks which were so numerous in June, had one by one dwindled into tiny streamlets. Even the main creek had shrunk into a modest little stream that gurgled unobtrusively among the great boulders. The noise of rushing water which is the chief one that disturbs these solitudes had ceased, and the silence was oppressive. No joyous birds gladdened the ear with song, or charmed the eye with gay plumage. A "camp robber" perched lazily on a limb. He was a solemn-looking creature about the size of a dove, and somewhat resembling that type of innocence; but he was a veritable wolf in sheep's clothing, a pirate masquerading as an envoy of peace, while he meditated an attack on your biscuits or your bacon. The predatory ground-squirrel stole from rock to rock or cut his absurd little capers on a log. Thousands of canary-colored butterflies flitted from place to place, or perched in the bright sunshine on the tops of young spruce trees. Innumerable flowers grew in the woods or "parks" as the open little prairies are called. There were thousands of bright yellow lilies, and a delicate flower with a scarlet color that made the hillsides glow. The sweet-scented columbine straggled here and there. But most numerous of all was a beautiful, delicate bluebell, as fresh as

the dew of the morning, which grew in an ever-renewing panicle of floral splendor. On the tops of the young spruce trees, pea-green tufts showed the new growth of the season, while bluish-purple cones stood bolt upright, exuding a rosin as clear as honey. Over all on this peaceful Sunday was the dark, mysterious, cloudless sky, and all around was silence.

During the intervals of laundry work Norwell and Wilson talked of home, and, as is natural with all young men, they loved to speak of the girls they left behind them. Wilson was rallying Tom on this subject.

"Norwell, I thought you were a trifle smitten with May Bryce."

"Wilson, I wouldn't be so mean as to attempt to cut out my friend."

Tom had the best reasons for believing that Wilson was more interested in another quarter, but for the sake of argument he chose to keep up this little fiction.

"Tom, I have no interest in the young lady beyond that of friendship."

"Now see here, Arthur, you don't expect me to believe that you could live in the same house with May Bryce for six months and resist the fascination of those blue eyes and bewitching smiles, do you?"

"I do," replied Wilson, and somehow his positive declaration appeared to give Norwell satisfaction. "I know you couldn't do it. But how about your New York girl?"

"Which one?" said Tom carelessly.

"I saw but one—Miss Chetta Ingledee."

"Oh, Chetta and I have always been good friends. We were almost brought up together. As for love, I never gave it a serious thought, and I guess she hasn't. Besides, here I am as poor as a church mouse, while she is the richest heiress in New York."

"All her millions will not buy true love."

"They'll buy her a husband, though, whenever she wants one."

"Yes, probably some broken-down foreign prince or titled snob, without money, but lots of blue blood, will pick her up, and think he has conferred a great honor upon the object of his choice, and she will be happy to receive it."

"No, she has too much sense for that. Why, here come the boys." Doffmeyer and Little Hackett had come back from their ramble. The former threw down a piece of rock,

and exclaimed, with more vigor of expletive than may be repeated here:

"Boys, staked a claim over there! Big thing I tell you. Four feet of that truck," and he gave the rock a kick.

"Where is it?" Norwell and Wilson both exclaimed breathlessly.

"It's clear over the gulch on the other hillside. Oh, it's the biggest thing I've seen in camp. It's bound to make us all rich."

After dinner they all started to see the new find and look at their fortune. The miner's system of financiering is the simplest in the world. He makes a million dollars by simply driving a stake in the ground. They all decided the new discovery to be a bonanza; there was a wide vein which was as prominent as a militia general on parade. They were in buoyant spirits. The tide of good luck had set toward them very strong of late. They decided to go home past the Bismarck. There is a fascination about a mining claim as powerful as that which draws men around a charming woman. They cannot keep away, but return again and again to contemplate the source of their happiness or misery, as the case may be.

They peered into the Bismarck shaft, hammered rocks awhile on the dump, and climbed a little farther up the steep mountain. There they saw a sight which made their hearts stand still with a great fear, and caused the Expert to become quite faint with swearing since his breath came rather hard in the mountains. The cause of the trouble was not a party of warlike Utes ready to take scalps; it was not a famished mountain lion ready to spring on his prey; it was not a deadly serpent barring their path, for snakes never lived on these altitudes; it was simply a little stake standing in a secluded spot by a log, and containing an inscription to the effect that certain parties claimed the identical ground covered by the Bismarck under date of May 20th, eight days before the Bismarck stake was set.

At first sight they were dumfounded. Their labor was lost. The silvery stream that was about to pour into their pockets was in danger of being turned into the strong box of somebody else. Others, it seemed, had a prior claim to the Bismarck. But second thoughts materially altered the state of the case. Wilson remembered distinctly that he and Bob Stengel had passed that very spot two or three days before,

and had seen no stake. Moreover, they had rested on that identical log. If any stake had been there they could not have missed seeing it, for they were constantly on the lookout for such things. Closer examination revealed the fact that the stake had been recently set. The rocks, too, which had been displaced under a pretence of beginning work, showed plainly that the labor had been performed but a few hours before. It was a daring attempt to jump their claim and swindle them out of their property. The new stake bore the name, "The Tooke Lode." This was a further suspicious fact.

There was, and is, at the time of this writing, a prominent citizen of Colorado who shall be known on these pages as J. W. Tooke. With the fondness for sobriquets which is a peculiarity of new communities, Tooke was styled the "Bullion King" by his fellow-citizens. This man, who finally acquired enormous wealth, began his career as a retail grocer. There is nothing especially elevating in the contemplation of brown sugar, bacon and laundry soap. Nor is the retail grocer's business specially lucrative. Tooke, however, found it the stepping stone to affluence.

Tooke made his wealth in mining. There are always scores of miners who are "dead broke," hanging around mining camps, hoping for something to turn up. Tooke made a regular business of "grub-staking" these men. The flour and bacon furnished from his grocery cost but little. If one man in twenty made a find Tooke would soon make a fortune. As soon as the wonderful discoveries at Argenta were noised abroad, Tooke sent some men to the place who staked much of the best ground. Two of these men discovered the famous "Little Buckeye" lode which for a time paid dividends on ten millions of stock. This was the basis of Tooke's wealth.

His methods of financiering in this instance are worthy of description as illustrating how readily sharpers may prey on a credulous public. Tooke bought out his penniless partners for a small fraction of the real value of the mine, though the sum was to them a fortune, and incorporated the "Little Buckeye Mining Company," with a capital stock of ten millions. Costly machinery was bought on credit and operations began at once. The output was unparalleled in the mining history of this country. Large as was the capital stock, it soon went above par and paid fancy dividends. As Tooke owned nearly all the stock, the monthly dividends went into

his own pockets. A mining fever, more contagious than small-pox, at once set in all over the country. For months men from all parts of the United States poured into Denver at the rate of five hundred to one thousand per day on their way to the new camps. People believed Argenta to be a second Potosi, for there is no limit to public gullibility when the public has once made up its mind to believe.

Valuable as was the stock of the "Little Buckeye," it was a noticeable fact that it could be purchased in the markets. A good rule, with respect to mining stock, is buy only that which is not for sale. Tooke was evidently a benefactor who was willing to let the people have some of the precious article for a consideration. Suddenly the "Little Buckeye" ceased to pay dividends. A great commotion ensued among the stockholders. The mine shut down. It was examined and found to be exhausted. It had been nothing but a great "pocket" of exceedingly rich ore which had all been taken out. But while the pocket of the "Little Buckeye" and its unfortunate stockholders was as flat as a pressed mackerel, Tooke's pocket was inflated to the point of bursting. It was found that he had very little of the "Buckeye" stock, but a few millions of ready cash instead. What was worse, the unfortunate company owed an immense sum for machinery and improvements.

Tooke now had unlimited faith in mining as an industry. Properly managed, he knew it would pay. He sent out scores of "grub-stakers" to harry the rock-ribbed hills into giving up their precious treasures. His name appeared in connection with nearly every "company," or scheme of the many, that originated in that period of excitement for the purpose of making money rapidly, easily, and without the disagreeable processes of hard labor, and waiting. The majority made money on paper. Incredible as it may appear, men argued because Tooke was in an enterprise, it must be a good thing for others to go into. They even adduced his wonderful luck, as they termed it, in Little Buckeye, as an argument to sustain their position.

There was no portion of the State, even the most remote little camp, where Tooke did not have interests. It was a matter of current talk that his agents were not over-scrupulous about the manner in which they obtained claims. If they could not get them peaceably they jumped them whenever there could be a shadow of a counter claim set up. But this,

of course, must be managed adroitly, for of all men in the world, the Western miners will endure the least imposition. By setting up a counter claim, however, it was often possible to secure an interest by compromise, where the owners were too plucky to give up the whole. In this way originates a large proportion of the voluminous and interminable litigation which is usually associated with the history of valuable mines.

Sometimes unscrupulous men took advantage of Tooke's reputation to further their own ends and used his name without any warrant whatever for doing so. His name on this stake at any rate indicated danger. An attempt would probably be made early Monday morning to jump the claim. A bold course of action was at once decided upon. The New Yorkers could not trust the Germans, for they had learned that the "Dutch boys" would lie as readily, and with apparently the same relish that they would munch a pretzel. The Expert was lazy, and as afterward proved, cowardly. Besides, Wilson had virtually quarreled with him. Without trusty allies Norwell, Wilson and Hackett were in a very dangerous position.

Norwell took Doffmeyer aside and candidly laid the whole situation before him, asking his advice. Doffmeyer's greater experience proved for once of some use. He advised building a cabin at the shaft, and shooting any persons who attempted to seize the claim. It was decided to build at once, without disclosing their intentions to the Germans. The latter were known to be friendly with the Long brothers, whose names appeared on the stake, and treachery was suspected.

With axes and a cross-cut saw they went to work with a desperate determination. The beautiful straight spruce trees were felled, cut into lengths, notched, put in place, and soon a rough structure was rising directly over the Bismarck shaft. They toiled on, regardless of approaching darkness. An attack might be expected any minute. Possibly it was a race for life. Fortunately there was a moon, which afforded ample light. By three o'clock in the morning the log cabin had risen high enough for the roof. The cracks between the logs were broken by spruce poles held tightly in place by pins driven into auger holes. With incredible labor they had accomplished a work that under ordinary circumstances would have required at least two days. What may not men accomplish when working for dear life, or to prevent the perpetration of a great wrong upon them?

Little Hackett had been sent by an unfrequented path to town to borrow a Winchester rifle from trusty friends. On his return he manfully set about transferring provisions from the tent to the new cabin, a distance of a quarter of a mile. All night long he passed and repassed that rugged path. His wasted frame bent under heavy loads of bacon, flour, dried fruit, working utensils and other camp necessaries. At such lofty elevations a very small quantity makes a load for a man who is obliged to scramble up precipices, around rocks and over logs and brush. Toward morning Hackett dropped on a blanket in the tent to snatch a brief rest. He could go no longer. Instantly he fell asleep, where the boys found him on their return in the early dawn.

A hearty breakfast was cooked and eaten. Blankets and other absolute necessities were transferred to the cabin, and they went to work and put a log roof on the side next the mountain, so that the enemy could not command the rude fortress from above. Then they carefully examined the rifle and their revolvers, and utterly exhausted by their unusual exertions, sat down to rest.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon seven or eight men appeared over the hill in a direction different from that which led directly to town. Norwell at once began hammering stone as if they were at work. Wilson, who in his country life had some experience with the rifle, took that trusty weapon and prepared for defence. Doffmeyer, who proved a coward after all his brave talk of dying on the claim, clutched his revolver, but his face grew a dirty white, the color of the snow on Ruby peak. He was in for it now, however, and there was nothing to be done but defend himself and get out with a whole skin if he could.

The new comers slipped quietly through the woods with the Long brothers leading the party. The latter had set the new stake early the morning before, and knew just where to find it. When they advanced within a few rods of the place they looked down the hill toward the Bismarck shaft. To say they were astonished is a very inadequate statement of their feelings. They had calculated on surprising the Bismarck owners down in the shaft, where they would be completely at the mercy of the jumpers. The programme was to pounce down on them and charge them with being jumpers, disarm them, and give them an hour to get out of the camp. If they refused they would be threatened with the

vengeance of the vigilance committee of the camp. Few tenderfeet they supposed would under such circumstances refuse. But here was a very unexpected apparition in the shape of a cabin, and men in it. They stared, unwilling to credit their senses. Yesterday there was no cabin there, but the one before them was certainly an uncomfortable reality. The jumpers after a short parley among themselves decided to resort to strategem, and if that failed they would try bluff.

One of the Long brothers advanced a little, though he seemed nervous about getting too near, mounted a log, and hailed the Bismarckers:

"Hello there, Bismarck! Say, Bismarck!"

"What's wanted?" hallooed Tom carelessly in reply.

"Want to talk with you."

"Fire away."

"Come up here so we can talk better." This polite invitation was declined with a derisive laugh.

"Come down here if you want to see us."

"Where are the Dutchmen?" As the exact status of the Stengels with reference to this plot was unknown, it was deemed wisest to evade this question, and take advantage of any doubt that might exist with reference to the number of defenders of the Bismarck. Tom replied indifferently:

"Oh, they're all right." Meantime not a man inside the cabin had shown himself to those outside for an instant. Long was enraged when he found none of his shallow devices had any effect whatever.

"D—n it, why don't you come out o' yer hole an' talk like a man?"

"Why don't you come down to the cabin like the brave men you appear to be?"

"Oh, we're comin', an' don't you forget it. See here, Mr. Norwell, we've just come up to notify you to git off this here claim. The Bismarck is no claim. You're on the Tooke lode, located by Long brothers eight days before your stake was stuck."

"That's a lie, and you know it. You set that stake yesterday."

"No we didn't, we set it last May. Here's two men that'll swear they saw me set it. It's older than yours." Just then a swaggering burly ruffian who carried a heavy six-shooter on either hip spoke up:

"Long, what's the use o' monkeyin'? Pull up their d—d stake an' we'll see you through."

As the men who made the rival claim, it behooved the Longs to take the first steps. But pulling up a miner's stake under the muzzle of his rifle requires even a higher form of courage than that required to face the cannon's mouth. In the latter case numbers inspire a mutual courage, in the former the only companionship is grim death uncomfortably close to your side. Long, though an abject coward, felt it incumbent to make a forward movement of some kind. With a great show of bravery he exclaimed:

"Come on, boys. I'll do it if you'll all stand by me." He advanced a few steps when Wilson's voice rang out clear:

"The man who pulls the Bismarck stake will never pull another in this world." Long stepped back, and the party held another brief consultation. Then Long again addressed the little party in the cabin:

"See here, boys, we don't want to be hard on you, an' we don't want any fuss. Mebbe you didn't see our stake when you set yours. Then of course you don't want anything that doesn't belong to you. But there's no use talkin', our stake holds the ground. We've three men to your one, and can git fifty more if we want 'em. If you'll git off the claim peaceably we'll call it square."

"We'll not get off the claim peaceably nor any other way. Your stake is a lie. We can prove that it wasn't there last week. If you want this claim you must take it."

There was another short consultation, and the attacking party scattered behind large trees. Tom whispered: "Look out; they're going to shoot." The party inside crouched on the ground awaiting the result, while Wilson, having stationed himself by a port-hole, commanded the party above. At a signal each of the jumpers fired two or three shots from his revolver. The balls struck the green spruce logs with a dull sound, or glanced from their sides, tearing off great splinters of bark and soft wood. The expert, after all danger was over, still crouched flat on the earth, his face white with terror. Nobody was hurt.

"The thieves, they'll not accomplish anything that way," muttered Wilson, who had refrained from firing. He had a horror of taking human life, and besides, the besiegers were thoroughly protected by trees. There were a few moments of profound silence. The attacking party evidently attributed the quietness of their opponents to fear. There was another

movement from the trees preparatory to another volley. Doffmeyer frantically strove to crawl into the very ground to the great amusement of the others. Norwell suggested that he jump into the shaft, which was certainly a safe place. Only shame prevented his doing so, for his pretended bravery was pitiably ludicrous when it came to the test. The most vindictive spirit could not wish a more terrible punishment visited on his foe than the agony endured by a coward thus brought to bay. There was another succession of sharp rattling explosions, and again the bullets flew thick around the cabin.

"I'll teach the fools a little common sense," said Wilson, and the clear, sharp report of the Winchester rifle echoed across the gulch. Simultaneously was heard a succession of horrible oaths. One of the jumpers had carelessly got behind a tree much too small to cover his person. One arm projected and Wilson's ball had broken the luckless member.

The attacking party now withdrew further up the hillside. But it was evident they had not yet abandoned their enterprise, for their voices could be heard in earnest discussion. The little party in the cabin were puzzled at the meaning of this new movement. They waited in anxious suspense. The bright sun now nearly overhead poured down his hot rays on them as if in mockery. Perhaps it was the last time they should ever behold his meridian splendors. The movement above was evidently taking shape. The jumpers were at work behind a clump of small spruce bushes, which effectually protected them from Wilson's rifle. The Expert was dodging up and down on the slightest alarm. What could the jumpers be doing behind those bushes? At length Doffmeyer exclaimed:

"My God, boys, they're going to roll rocks on us."

"But there are scarcely any rocks up there in the woods," replied Wilson.

"There's one big one. I saw it the other day. It's as big as a hay-cock and nearly round."

"That'll fix us I guess, and no mistake," said Tom.

"It may miss us after all. I'll just put a bullet through that clump of trees and wake the rascals up." As the rifle ball whistled through the brushwood there was another brief interval of perfect silence.

"Hadn't we better get into the shaft," suggested Doffmeyer.

"No," said Tom, "that is useless. If it went in there it

would only kill all of us. If we stay outside some may escape. That big tree is our only hope."

This new danger was an awful one. No human ingenuity could avert it. If the big rock struck the cabin as it was likely to do, for a slight hollow ran directly down to it, no power on earth could save them. It would send the green logs flying like a card house, and be sure to kill or maim some one, if not all of the inmates of the structure. One chance remained. Just above the cabin stood an enormous dead spruce tree, which even in decay towered above its fellows. It was thickly covered with dry branches and long strips of bark dangled from its trunk. During the few minutes of leisure, before the coming of the jumpers, the fear was expressed that the tree might fall on the cabin. Now it was suddenly transferred from a threatened danger into a source of hope, their only hope.

"Hackett," said Tom, "slip out and go to the tent. There's enough of us left. These murderers will not shoot at you if they see you. Go quick."

"No, Mr. Tom, I can be of use here maybe. Any way, I shan't sneak off."

Suddenly a voice above sang out: "All ready. Let her fly." The jumpers had by great effort pried the enormous boulder from its deep bed, and were ready to launch it on its mission of destruction. The men in the cabin held their breath in dread suspense. A fiendish shout of exultation arose as the mighty rock plowed its way through all obstacles. Dry brush and loose stones rattled in its wake down the steep mountain side. It whipped a spruce tree six inches in diameter to the ground like a weed. It went directly for the cabin like a sentient thing that realized its purpose. With a furious bound high in the air, like a maddened wild beast, it leaped against the old spruce tree. But the latter was powerful even in death. The shock was terrific. A perfect shower of decayed branches and bark rained down from the old tree, which swayed like a reed in a storm.

The great rock had struck a glancing blow. It spun sideways past the end of the cabin, snapping one of the projecting logs as if it had been a glass tube, but doing no harm, then with a mighty bound it cleared the Bismarck dump, and went tearing through the woods below like a very demon, A cheer that made the woods ring was given by the party in the cabin, while curses and imprecations on the old tree were heard from the jumpers.

The rage of the attacking party knew no bounds when they saw the failure of their pet scheme. They swore the most blood-curdling oaths, mingled with grotesque and ingeniously constructed maledictions. Suddenly one of them sprang forward to an open position, and fired three or four shots in rapid succession at the cabin, about the spot he supposed most likely to take effect through the cracks. The besieged dropped close to the ground. Excepting Doffmeyer, they felt little fear. One ball however, penetrated a crevice between a log and the pole that stopped the crack, tore off a piece of soft wood, glanced and struck Hackett fairly in the left side of the breast. There was a suppressed "Oh," and the boy, catching for breath, turned as white as a sheet. Tom sprang to his side and tore open his clothing. The ball dropped out, but a great blue spot arose almost instantly. No blood was drawn, and Hackett smiling in his pain, gasped:

"I'm all right, Mr. Tom." Wilson, burning with indignation, strove to get a shot at the cowardly miscreant who fired the bullet, but in vain. Some new comers now interrupted the proceedings. The Stengels, who were smoking in their cabin, having heard the cheers, came over to see "Vat was up mit te claim." They could scarcely credit their senses when they saw the cabin.

"Mine gott, who builded dot cabin?" asked Herman.

"We did," said Norwell. "Come in here and help defend your claim."

"Defend dot claim! Who tries to jump dot claim kits a bullet. Dot's all."

"Then come inside and be as good as your word."

"Poof! You bet I don't go in dot shanty. Who says dot claim isn't mine?"

"You're on our ground," said Long.

"Your ground! Not py a tam sight," said Bob Stengel.

"Here's our stake to prove it."

"Dot little shtake? Somebody put dot shtake dere inside tree tays. We cot te proof too." The Dutchman, though correct in his opinion, knew he was lying about the proofs. The jumpers however, thought they had been seen setting the stake, which was a penitentiary offence. They, instead of finding the tenderfeet, an easy prey, had got themselves in a dangerous predicament should the whole case become known to the honest miners of the place. They were willing to get out of the scrape if they could find a shadow of an excuse.

That the Germans were not acting honestly in the matter, Tom and his associates suspected from the first. Their indifference now was unaccountable. They talked all right, but were unwilling to aid their partners. Besides, they were known to be friends of the Longs. Finally, Herman Stengel said:

"Poys, dot's great pusiness quarrelin' apout claims. Der's plenty for eferypody. Long, I yoost gifs you half intrust in a claim up Elk Basin if you'll work by de assessment."

"I don't want any claim in the basin. This is a good enough hill for me." The entire party on both sides were now holding a parley under a tree.

"Gott in himmel, I'll gif you half an interest in der *Yankee* Doodle right ofer on dis hill. It's a daisy too. Pull up dot little shtake an' go ofer der." So it was agreed that the Long party should take the Yankee Doodle, and give up all claims to the Bismarck. They had accomplished something at least, and pretended to be pleased. Norwell and Wilson, however, suspected collusion between the Longs and the Stengels.

CHAPTER XXI.

A NIGHT HORROR IN THE SHAFT.

Things now went on quietly for several days, and the owners of the Bismarck hoped there would be no more trouble. Miners came past the shaft every day, examined the ore, pronounced it "mighty rich truck," peered into the shaft and passed on. These visits, though chiefly from honest men who were working claims of their own in the vicinity, were a constant source of disquiet to Norwell and Wilson. In mining business where a valuable claim is in dispute, one never knows who is his enemy or who may be scheming to beat him out of his property. One day a big, honest-looking fellow, who had lost two fingers from one hand, came along and talked for some time with Norwell, who was taking his turn at the windlass above ground. Finally the big man, who was a good natured fellow, remarked:

"Mr. Norwell, I've heard all about your trouble here,

and I can give you a pointer or two. I believe you men are good fellows and ought to know."

"Any information will be gladly received."

"Of course them jumpers was d—d rascals, and you ought to have shot every mother's son of 'em. But let me tell you, just keep an eye on your Dutch partners. I set a stake on this very spot a few days before they set theirs. When I come back to see about it they had thrown it away and stuck up theirs. Of course I've forfeited my rights by allowin' the time for workin' to run out." Tom was silent. The miner went on: "My name is Briggs. You can find me any time in the basin. Another thing. It's talked around the camp that the Bismarck is not surveyed on her lead. It doesn't look like it to me. See, she runs about north and south, while your stake reads thirty-five west of north."

"I think we're on a bend in the vein," said Tom.

"May be," replied Briggs, "but these veins run tolerable straight. If I were you I'd resurvey," saying which he shouldered his pick and shovel and went his way.

Here was a new source of trouble, which the boys discussed anxiously. By consulting those posted in mining law they discovered that a resurvey could be legally made, but that the rights of the claim must date from the time of such survey. By this means they would lose a large portion of their surface rights, which under the peculiar workings of mining law, would be taken by claims of a later date, which already lapped theirs. If they did not resurvey, their lead, instead of extending on their own ground the fifteen hundred feet allowed by law, would probably leave it, and they should lose several hundred feet of valuable mineral. Then, after all, the Germans had deceived them concerning the title to the Bismarck.

Sunday was the day for collecting "pointers" and comparing notes with other miners. Next Sunday the entire party went down town. Passing the only hotel in the place some one hailed them from the door. To their great surprise it was Garmand.

"Hello, Garmand. This is indeed a pleasure."

"It is, I assure you, a mutual pleasure, Mr. Norwell—and Mr. Wilson too, I believe?"

"Yes," replied the latter; "I'm pleased to meet old friends." Wilson took Garmand's hand with a twinge of compunction. He had unmercifully guyed this man when

they met before in New York, and now that he was a possible acquaintance it was a matter of regret. After all, Garmand had sterling qualities, in spite of the fact that his delightful freshness was irrepressible.

"When did you come in?"

"Just got in."

"How do you like the country?"

"Cawn't hardly say yet. It seems to have a delightful primitiveness about it."

"Fairly primitive," added Tom.

"And the scenery seems aw—quite—I might say extensive." As Ruby Buttes was situated in the midst of the bewildering grandeur of the Elk Mountains, the scenery might with propriety be called extensive. After a pleasant conversation they wandered aimlessly around town, and listened to that amusement ever dear to miners—lying about their claims. Among the well-known characters of the camp was an irrepressible old Munchausen who went by the name of San Juan Shorty. He had acquired this sobriquet from his diminutive stature, and the constant repetition of whopping lies about his rich claims in the San Juan country. This latter he pronounced as if it had been an English word instead of a Spanish one, so guileful in appearance and so full of snags to wreck articulation. Whether San Juan Shorty's other name (it is presumed he had one) was ever known in camp or not, is a matter of no consequence. He answered to San Juan Shorty, and that is quite enough for present purposes.

San Juan Shorty was in stature about five feet two, well-built, but lithe and tough as a roasted hickory withe. His complexion was a rich old bronze, which approached a dull copper. It was a complexion made for service. The sun and wind daily ripened its rare tints. I will for a moment usher the reader into the privacy of Shorty's dressing room, back of a dry goods box in his tent, and disclose the secret of this wonderful complexion. He seldom vexed it with soap and water. Shorty had a stubby pug nose, little eyes like shoe buttons, and a shaggy, unkempt beard full of tobacco juice and grease. His head was as round as a billiard ball, and his very red ears projected from the sides of the sphere at right angles. He was dressed in the universal brown duck coat and overalls, which were so thoroughly japanned with grease and dirt that they were completely waterproofed. The side pockets of his coat were constantly bulged with speci-

mens of rock from his San Juan mines and elsewhere. One of his hands had been shattered by a premature explosion of giant powder, leaving the member badly bent and warped, but still serviceable. He walked with a halting, awkward gait, such as might be acquired by a man who all his life had traveled round a hill in one direction till his framework got adjusted to the slope, rendering it difficult for him to walk on any other kind of ground. In their rambles around town they met Shorty, and Tom introduced him to Garmand.

"Mr. Garmand allow me, Mr. San Juan Shorty. From London," added Tom.

"Very pleased to know you, Mr. Shorty."

"How d'ye do, Mr. Garmand?" said Shorty, as the little black eyes peered from under his old slouch hat. Capitalist, I reckon?"

"No, hardly. Oh, if I chanced on a good thing I might pick it up, possibly." The very fact that a man was from New York, Boston, or any large city stamped him at once as a "capitalist," and miners trotted after him continually, giving him no peace by day or night.

"I've got the biggest thing in the San Juan you ever heerd of. Solid vein of quartz six feet thick, full of gold in specks the size of a pea and up. It'll run five thousand dollars to the ton, an' is worth five millions. I'll—"

"Garmand," said Tom, "there goes a man that I want to speak to, come;" and he dragged away the surprised Englishman. "That man will talk you blind, and there's no heading him off. He's very amusing though, when you have leisure."

"Come an' see me," Shorty called after them. "First tent on the right as you pass the end of the lake."

"I'll see him again. Really, I consider him quite a study."

"Yes, you can put a great deal of study there in a small space."

They now entered the Elk Mountain saloon, kept by Texas Jack. Texas Jack was a gentlemanly gambler. He kept the most high-toned establishment in the place. The building was a long double cabin, that is, a cabin built of two lengths of logs, making one long building. On one side was a bar made of planed lumber, but unpainted. It was distinguished from the other less aristocratic bars of the place by the fact that they were both unplaned and unpainted. The customary metal stoves were in full blast. Further toward

the rear were tables for faro, keno, and other seductive Rocky Mountain amusements. Here night after night some of the miners lost in bets the money they needed to purchase flour, bacon and powder.

Texas Jack himself happened to be back of the counter where the barkeeper usually presided. He was a magnificent specimen of manhood, six feet high, and of powerful build. His head was rather wide at the base of the ears, but he had a good forehead and regular, pleasing features. He had full lips, a chin with a median depression, and a short neck that indicated great physical resources. His keen eye told at a glance that the man who got ahead of Texas Jack, must get up very early in the morning, possibly he must stay up all night.

He was dressed in buckskin trousers with buckskin fringe down the outer seams, a short, light-colored corduroy coat, wine-colored velvet vest, blue flannel shirt with neck-tie, and a cream-colored sombrero of immense proportions. Texas Jack was the best informed man in town. Though nobody knew anything of his antecedents, it was apparent that he had possessed the advantages of education and polite associations in his youth. Whatever he might once have been he was now a frontiersman who knew the country and its ways like a book. In the money-drawer lay a six-shooter and another quietly reposed among the lemons on a shelf in plain view. This was a sort of silent police which had a wonderful effect in keeping order, for it was generally believed that no man in camp could "get the drop" on Texas Jack. Yet his manners were easy and cordial, and though he may have "killed his man" elsewhere in the West, he had not yet established any such sanguinary reputation at Ruby Buttes.

When Norwell, Wilson and Garmand entered Jack stepped smilingly forward and greeted his friends over the bar, ready to minister to their wants for things spirituous. This want usually took the form of whisky straight at twenty-five cents a nip. The reader must understand here that the adjective straight does not apply to the whisky itself, which certainly was not above suspicion, but to the manner of serving. Norwell, however, had no intention of imbibing, but merely wished to introduce his friend.

"Mr. Garmand, Texas Jack. Jack, Mr. Garmand." To introduce a well-known frontiersman by his real name, ignoring the popular appellation, would be a grave breach of eti-

quette as robbing the individual of his acquired laurels and relegating him to the rank of an ordinary mortal. So the gambler was merely Texas Jack instead of Mr. Sanders. To call him Sanders would have been an insult which there was no legitimate way of resenting, and would consequently be taking a mean advantage of a gentleman. Jack, leaning over the bar, grasped Garmand's hand cordially:

"How d'ye do, Mr. Garmand. Happy to know you. Eastern man?"

"Rawther, in fact, yes, London," said Garmand, with a drawl that made Jack's eyes sparkle with a keen sense of the humor lurking in cockney expression.

"London. That is quite a ways east. As you are such a great stranger, I reckon the treat's on the Buttes. What'll you have, gents?" Garmand took beer. His limited experience had not inured him to the peculiarly exhilarating influences of American whisky when imbibed by the tumblerful. Several miners hanging around had a poorly-disguised contempt for the man who would pour so weak a libation as beer on the altar of newly-made acquaintance. Norwell, whose notions on the subjects of temperance were very easy, said he would try a seductive combination known as "Rock and Rye." It proved to be a beverage in which the rock, whatever that might be, greatly predominated over the rye, and a swallow sufficed for Tom's New York taste. Wilson never drank under any circumstances, but knew it was not politic to risk giving offence to so influential an individual as Texas Jack, so he took a cigar. After a few minutes' conversation the party left the saloon. Garmand remarked to Tom, as they were picking their way over the big boulders that covered the street:

"Saw your girl the day before I left New York."

"Indeed," replied Tom carelessly.

"Yes, she sent her best regards to you. But then I suppose you've had them more direct before this."

"I'm much obliged to you," said Tom, evading the indirect question. "As you cannot carry mine back directly, I suppose it is useless to intrust you with them now."

On the hill near the Bismarck was a claim called the Ivanhoe, owned by two young men who worked it, and an old man who furnished the capital. These young men were straightforward gentlemen. On this same Sunday one of them, by the name of George Mack, came to Wilson and

confidentially informed him that he was considered the leading spirit in the defense of the Bismarck, and that the jumping party had by no means abandoned their attempt to get possession of the claim. Since open jumping by force of arms, however, would not be tolerated by the other miners of the camp, Mack cautioned Wilson to be on his guard constantly, lest some attempt should be made to accomplish by underhanded measures what they had failed to effect by force. Mack further remarked that in case of trouble Norwell and Wilson could rely on the Ivanhoe boys for assistance.

"I know the Long brothers and that Argenta crowd," he said. "They tried their tricks up there till they had to skip the camp."

The following Monday the Long party located the Keokuk lode on a little bit of vacant ground scarcely wider than a bed quilt. It was a triangle between other claims, and so small that it had escaped the notice of prospectors. Under the mining laws a man can follow an unclaimed lead anywhere underground if he only has sufficient vacant surface to dig a shaft on. The Keokuk surveyed directly toward the Bismarck, and it was apparent that this was only another attempt to steal that property, which was showing up better every day as the work progressed. But the Keokuk was legally located, and there was no help for it.

Work began at once. As the two shafts were but a short distance apart, the two companies naturally became better acquainted. The Long party tried to be cordial. They had apparently forgotten all about the attack on the Bismarck in which they came out second best. Wilson, having been warned, distrusted them, but Norwell's unsuspicious good nature was inclined to forgive the attempted wrong, particularly since it had signally failed. Neither of them, however, gave the slightest encouragement to the advances of the Long brothers, whom they regarded as sneaking, cowardly and dishonest. The other men frequently came over to the Bismarck to look at the "truck." One of them, by the name of Berry, seemed a fair sort of fellow, and by degrees got on good terms with the Bismarck boys.

One afternoon Norwell was obliged to take some drills down town to be sharpened. Doffmeyer took the windlass, and Wilson went into the shaft. Little Hackett had never felt right since the bullet struck him. In fact, he seemed to get thinner and weaker every day. He kept up manfully,

but the boys allowed him to do but little work. Lately he had been taking short trips, prospecting in company with a boy by the name of Ward, who was about his own age. These short excursions enabled him to enjoy, from the tops of the mountains, the magnificent scenery which stretched away for many miles in sublime grandeur.

On this particular afternoon Berry came over, as usual. He was on the night shift of the Keokuk. He spent the forenoon sleeping, and the afternoon lounging around other claims, or at town. There was a tremendous mistake in the matter of Doffmeyer coming into this part of the world. He seized every available opportunity to escape from hard work, and should have been born in those tropical regions where men pluck a luxurious repast from the trees without the disagreeable preliminaries of planting and harvest. But for some inscrutable reason the Deity had placed him in the midst of industrious people who earn their daily bread by hard labor. Doubtless lazy people, like fleas, rats and other pests, have a mission, but it is not very apparent. Doffmeyer suddenly remembered that he had pressing business down town, and Berry readily consented to take his place at the windlass. This change was effected without Wilson's knowledge. The first he knew of it was when he called out, "Hoist," and looking up, saw Berry step to the windlass.

"Hello, that you, Berry? Where's Doffmeyer?"

"Gone to town. I'm going to spell him awhile." Wilson said no more. Bucket after bucket of rock slowly rose from the shaft, which was now nearly forty feet deep. At last the loose rock was cleared away, and Wilson thought he could pick about an hour before putting in another blast. There had been several buckets of water to draw up. The last shot had shattered the rock badly, and for the first time the Bismarck was to encounter the serious difficulty of water. Berry wished to go over to the Keokuk cabin after some tobacco. Wilson said, "All right. Let down the rope and put in the crank-pin before you go." This pin inserted in the upright of the windlass prevented the crank from turning. The rope could then be used as a means of climbing out of the shaft. Berry let down the rope and walked away, leaving Wilson forty feet in the ground.

The latter picked vigorously at the rock for about twenty minutes and then called "bucket." He sat down and rested for a few minutes, thinking Berry was somewhere near. He

shouted "bucket" again. No response. Then he rattled the rope which would shake the windlass and attract attention. To his surprise it unwound a little. With an exclamation of impatience he pulled it again; it unwound further. The few minutes' rest in his perspiring condition gave him a sense of chilliness. He went to work and picked vigorously for a few minutes.

Some distance above, perhaps at a height of fifteen feet, was a shoulder of rock which projected into the shaft a foot or more at its thickest edge. It was a huge irregular slab that looked as if it should come out, but the seams in the rock rendered it impossible to make a smooth, regular shaft. At first they had often tried this immense fragment, which appeared to be wedged firmly in the unbroken rock, to see if it was loose. It had always appeared to be so firmly set that it was considered perfectly safe. Under this great wedge the seams in the rock had caused the shaft to encroach slightly on the wall rock, and then it suddenly resumed its regular dimensions, leaving a narrow ledge hardly six inches wide. By mounting on this ledge, some eight feet from the bottom, Wilson could insert his pick under the threatening mass and test its strength. To his surprise he found it dangerously loose, the crack having opened at the top of it an inch or more. He must be hauled up out of danger from its fall, and pry it off at once.

Again he shouted "bucket." No response. He called at the top of his voice, but the sound only rolled around the shaft in a confusing way, that half frightened him, and appeared to die within the great well in mocking echoes. He listened attentively. His ear could now detect what he had never before noticed. The click of the hammer on the drill head in the Yankee Doodle could be plainly heard. The intervening rock conveyed the sound in a low monotonous "tup, tup, tup, tup." Again he shouted "Berry" at the top of his voice. He was startled at the result. The echoes rolled around the shaft, and came back to him as plainly as he ever heard words in his life, "buried."

The sound had an ominous suggestiveness that made him shudder for a moment. But his strong physical nature rallied against anything resembling a presentiment. It was the damp chill of the shaft which made him shiver. His old coat daubed all over with clay lay on a rock in the corner; he put it on. Here was a predicament. At once he suspected

Berry of a trick, for he could never get over his suspicions of the Long gang. He banished that thought almost as soon as formed. What could be accomplished by leaving a man in a shaft an hour or two? Nothing. Night was rapidly approaching, when Norwell would return and release him.

The chilly air grew heavier and damper. He set to work and picked vigorously for a few minutes, when he discovered that the water had come in so rapidly, that nothing more could be done till that was removed. He sat down on a piece of rock. A little fragment from above fell on his back. He rose and looked intently at the big wedge directly overhead. Was the crack a little wider that marked its upper edge? He strained his eyes intently. Another bit of rock fell. The great mass was slowly forcing itself out of the rude, groove-like bed, where it had rested for ages. It was time to get out of here. Again he called, "Berry." This time the echo seemed to have a mocking tone as it answered, "Buried."

Then he thought of the rope. Forty feet was a good climb for a man who was unused to climbing ropes. He said, half aloud: "It's easy to try." The low sepulchral echo murmured to his excited fancy, "It's easy to die." The thought was a very uncomfortable one, but he had no notion of dying just yet. He took hold of the rope and pulled it downward, intending when it drew taut to climb out. Suddenly he remembered that the rope itself was not fastened to the windlass. It was very long, and as several coils were always around the drum there was no need of a secure fastening. Hence it had been attached only by a small rope, which he remembered was not new. He raised himself and threw all his weight on the rope. It did not part. To be sure, he determined to give it a thorough test. He climbed up to his own height and dangled violently. Still it held firm. He looped one foot into it after mounting the little ledge above and jumped off. It snapped and came down in a confusing coil all around his head. Could he climb out? There was no possibility of his climbing up those jagged wet rocks.

The water had now gathered to a considerable depth. He had been seriously splashed when he came down from the ledge. He was cold, hungry and tired. He looked up. The setting sun was lighting the extreme top of a tall spruce with a dull red glow. In a few minutes twilight would begin. Norwell might now be expected any minute. Berry had

evidently played him a contemptible trick. He dared not call that name again aloud for the echo, "buried," still seemed to ring in his ears.

Wilson again climbed to the narrow ledge. The water had now covered the last of the loose rocks, and still crawled steadily, slowly, mercilessly toward its prey. He must seek refuge from its icy embrace on the slippery bench. Then he jumped down again in sudden alarm, for the ledge was directly under the moving mass of rock. When he got down he found the water nearly to the tops of his high rubber boots. He should freeze to death in that icy bath. He climbed again to the little ledge. It was not over six inches wide, and he could not sit down there. He could in fact, only stand by placing his feet carefully one before the other on the slimy stone, and bracing himself with one elbow against the cold wet rock which formed the other side of the triangle. "Norwell will surely soon be here," thought the imprisoned man. "They are waiting supper for me now and will soon come to call me."

Suddenly an awful thought flashed across his mind. That day he had announced his intention of going over to O-Be-Joyful gulch, to see a friend of his from the East and stay all night. They might not come to release him till morning. The thought gave him a chill and he shivered in the icy air. Then his blood went tingling to every extremity in a hot flush of frenzy, at the desperate situation in which treachery had placed him. He was caged here with a deliberate refinement of cruelty, far worse than that which leaves the mangled wild beast to perish slowly in the trap.

The sunlight faded from the great spruce tree overhead, and the twinkling stars appeared. It was now very dark in the Bismarck shaft. It was plain that Norwell thought he had gone on his visit without supper. Below the starlight fell dimly on the water, showing that it rose inch by inch, a slow, but sure and miserable death. No human being could endure its icy coldness till morning. It would soon reach the ledge, soon pass the tops of his rubber boots—then would begin its deliberate, cruel attack on the life stored in the pulsing currents of the blood. He began to reckon confusedly, whether all this might not take sufficient time for them to find him still alive in the morning. He could make out nothing satisfactory. Hope hates figures.

A good-sized fragment of rock dropped from above, and

startled him as it splashed into the sullen pool. He listened with ears strained by an agony of apprehension, for he could no longer see the awful danger surrounding him. The creaking of the moving mass was plainly audible to his excited imagination. It certainly must soon give way. Ah, this death, unlike the crawling icy terror below, would be swift and certain. The great rock seemed to him like a wild animal crouching to bound upon its victim. It would crush him in an instant, then all would be over. He almost wished it would make haste in its work. It was better far than the merciless monster below, which was satisfied to crawl with slow deliberation toward its dreadful purpose. After all, the stone might miss him in its fall. He would fight desperately for his life. He shrank as close as possible against the cold rock of the shaft at the adjoining side. No, it was useless. It must either knock him off or throw up water enough to saturate his clothing.

Wilson's thoughts were exceedingly active. At once he realized the fiendish cruelty of his enemies, and believed they had entrapped him purposely. He tried in vain to devise some means of escape. Then he thought of the last piece of quartz he had taken out, and strangely enough, wondered how much it would assay. He inwardly cursed the rich Bismarck vein which had brought him to a lingering, miserable death. This roused him to a sense of his wrongs. He felt sure those men would kill Norwell too. Oh, if he could only live to warn his friend.

Hark! What was that sound? His heart leaped for joy. He recognized human voices. It was the night shift going to work on the Yankee Doodle. It must be only eight o'clock; it had seemed an age. He would call to them. At first he had an irresistible impulse to call Berry's name and hear what the echo would say this time. No, he would not call the despicable traitor. Perhaps some of the men might have a spark of humanity remaining which would not allow them to see a fellow being perish like a worm. He called loudly for help. No reply. He yelled at the top of his voice; still no reply, and all was silent in the solemn woods. Presently he heard the measured "tup, tup, tup, tup," in the Yankee Doodle. The men were all at work drilling and could not hear him.

Numbed and cramped, Wilson felt he could not hope to hold out all night even if the big rock did not give

way. He must change his position and rest his aching muscles. Putting one hand out carefully against the wall to get a new hold, he felt, oh joy! a "snuff" sticking in the clay of a crevice. A snuff is a bit of candle used for firing the fuse when a blast is discharged. With much effort, owing to the numbness of his fingers, he succeeded in striking a match which miners always carry, and lighted the poor little candle scarce half an inch long. He could at least see his danger. The sight was not reassuring, for the flickering rays of the water-soaked candle revealed the fact that the water was nearly to the ledge on which he stood, and consequently between six and eight feet deep. But suddenly his eyes lighted on an object that caused his heart to bound with hope. The water had brought up with it a short, stout piece of timber about ten feet long, which had been used as a skid. If he could only reach that he might be able to plant it firmly in the crevices so as to slide off the impending rock from a direct course.

But the upper end of the piece of timber was at the opposite side of the shaft. It was extremely hazardous to attempt to cross to it. Crossing involved turning round on the slippery ledge. With infinite care he worked his feet backward resting the right hand against the side wall which he now faced, until his body was bent double and he could no longer safely balance himself. This was the critical point, the letting go with one hand to place the other on the opposite wall. Then he slowly straightened himself up and balanced his body directly under the loose rock, leaning with his back flat against the wall. He scarcely dared breathe lest he should lose his balance. The danger of the impending rock was forgotten in the more imminent chance of tumbling into the icy water. Then he worked his feet around on the ledge till the toes pointed in the opposite direction, next sliding his body carefully along the wall behind him till his left hand reached the other wall. The difficult feat was performed and he worked himself directly over the end of the coveted skid, which was now worth more than its weight in gold. Here a new difficulty arose. Stoop as much as he dared he could not reach the floating log, and was in imminent danger of falling head first into the water. The candle too, was expiring. Suddenly he remembered he had another snuff left in his pocket when he fired the last blast. This could not last very long, however, and the work must be done quickly. The bit of candle was placed in a niche of the wall.

Looking intently at the stick below, he observed a short stub of a branch projecting two or three inches. A sudden idea came like an inspiration. He would make a lasso of his suspenders and hook them on the little limb. With infinite pains, holding to the wall as best he could, Wilson managed to remove his suspenders and fasten the front ends together forming a loop, while he held the crotch of the hind end in his hand. It was very uncertain work fishing for the little projecting stub in the dim light. Finally he caught it fairly and slowly drew the skid upward which was no difficult matter so long as it remained in the water. With great pains he got it on end directly under him. Then he gradually drew it up till, with a supreme effort, which nearly cost him his balance, he landed the well-seasoned log endwise on the little bench. It was now only a question of time and caution. He carefully slid one end from him till it rested firmly against the opposite corner, beyond the possibility of slipping. The end over his head fortunately was just the length to rest securely in a deep niche which would not let the skid slip when the rock fell on it.

One danger was averted. The monster below remained in all his terrors. The icy water was now crawling over the ledge as the last snuff expired. The joy of rescue from immediate danger was so great, that in the reaction following, Wilson's limbs trembled till he clung to the friendly beam above him for support. Its presence at once inspired him with new life. By its aid he hoped to hold out till morning. In his gratitude he hugged the precious log as his dearest, best friend, and clung to it as a child clings to its mother.

Then there came a great revulsion. The prisoner was thoroughly exhausted by his superhuman efforts. He leaned heavily on the friendly log though he knew safety demanded that he should get under it. But that was impossible. In his numbed condition he could no longer stand on the narrow ledge without throwing one arm around the skid for support. Human endurance could do no more. After all, he was still facing death. Not only facing it, but had it at his back. Compared with such a situation, the dangers of battle become trifling. There you have a foe in front of you who, like yourself, is human, and who may be merciful. The soldier has an even chance against his enemy, and has the inspiration of companionship with the consciousness that if he falls his death may serve his country. Here was a man entrapped in

a remorseless vise that was slowly closing. Below was a creeping thing that slowly but surely rose to fasten upon him, and little by little drown the fires of life. Above was a creaking, crunching, brute force that seemed to gloat over its victim's agony before it sprang to crush him.

Wilson now realized the horror of his situation. There was no hope. The thoughts of the doomed man again grew active. They flew hither and thither over the events of his past life. Suddenly they were interrupted by a loud report. Boom, boom, boom! Three heavy shots in the Yankee Doodle aroused him. It must be about eleven o'clock, for three men could put in three shots since eight. They must now be outside, and he would call again. But his voice was husky and did not appear to rise above the damp vapors of the shaft. He was not greatly disappointed. He was ready to die, and no longer clung desperately to hope as he did when fixing the skid in place. He was very numb and grew drowsy, then went into a half-dreamy condition.

He woke from this doze with a start and imagined he could recognize Tom Norwell's voice. It was pleasant to hear those familiar tones, even in a dream. Again they softly called, "Wilson, Arthur!" Now he was wide awake, for he thought he heard the sound of other voices. Was it a fantasy, or were there men at the mouth of the shaft?

With all his remaining strength he called, "Hello! Tom." It was a delusion. There were no voices. Again he called "Norwell." Immediately Tom's voice in excited tones called down the shaft, "Are you there, Wilson?"

"Yes, for God's sake get me out quick. I'm nearly dead with cold." In a frenzy of joy he clung desperately to the log lest he might yet fall into the water.

The Bismarck rope was in the bottom of the shaft, but to get one from the Yankee Doodle was the work of but a few minutes. Strong arms hoisted the exhausted man quickly to the top. Just as he landed on the platform, the loose mass of rock gave way and dropped into the water with a frightful splash. With awe-stricken faces the men looked at each other, and one said in a low tone, "I never knowed a closer call since the big cave in the 'Iron Hat,' at Argenta." But Wilson heard nothing. He had swooned in Norwell's arms. For three days he lay in a fever, and at times his senses wandered in delirium. Then he begged them not to drown him. But his vigorous constitution rapidly rallied and before long he was ready to work at the windlass.

Berry disclaimed all evil intent in this strange affair. On going to the cabin he met one of the Long brothers, who dispatched him to town for powder and fuse. He thought Wilson could easily climb the rope if he wished to get out before Doffmeyer returned. Hackett got supper at six o'clock and waited anxiously, but nobody came. Norwell returned at seven and found him very nervous and uneasy. As Wilson had not come to supper they concluded he had gone on his contemplated visit. When Doffmeyer returned after ten o'clock at night and reported that he had left Berry at the windlass and Wilson in the shaft, Tom censured him for such a very careless, if not dangerous proceeding. Norwell and Hackett at once determined to go up to the shaft, though they did not really anticipate that anything unusual had happened. Not caring to let the Long party know of their visit, which seemed a little mysterious, Tom had called softly into the shaft several times, but receiving no answer had started back toward the cabin, when Wilson's voice came to him indistinctly. Then he was on the point of starting homeward again when Hackett's sensitive ear caught Wilson's second cry.

When Norwell learned all the particulars of Berry's treachery, he was furious. Buckling on a heavy six-shooter, he announced his determination of seeking Berry and demanding an explanation. Such a course beyond doubt, would have resulted in bloodshed. With great difficulty Hackett and Doffmeyer dissuaded him from this course. When Wilson recovered, he argued that no good could come from an open quarrel. They must however, be constantly on their guard.

CHAPTER XXII.

DEATH ON THE CLIFF.—THE BISMARCK TAKEN BY STRATEGY.

The narrow escape of Wilson from a frightful death had a bad effect on Little Hackett. His nerves were completely unstrung. No especial form of disease manifested itself, but he daily grew thinner and paler. The poor hunchback ex-

hibited many of the signs of old age. He had never had a healthy development, and was now rapidly wearing out under the effects of this highly electrical, stimulating climate. The only physician in the camp said he would never be strong anywhere. Perhaps after a few months' acclimation he might in a measure recover his health. But an event soon after occurred which greatly accelerated his decline. He and young Ward had still been prospecting almost daily in the mountains. Allusion has been made to the magnificent scenery around Ruby Buttes, and a short description of its striking features may be of interest.

The town is situated in a wide gulch, at the head of which is a basin of considerable extent, containing a lake of perhaps twenty acres. Above this basin, which is itself ten thousand feet above the sea, the ground rises into ridges, which culminate in a mighty peak that pierces the clouds at an elevation of nearly fifteen thousand feet. At the very head of this basin and at the foot of the peak lies a beautiful little emerald lake, shaped like an enormous punch bowl. This lake empties its waters over a cliff in a silvery cascade about seventy-five feet high. The lake and waterfall are covered with an immense snowdrift every winter, to a depth at times, of perhaps one hundred and fifty feet. In the spring the water cuts its way under this snowy mantle, and the foaming cataract gradually eats out in the snow a beautiful dome of great dimensions, the interior of which is worn into wave-like depressions and elevations. This surface, covered with exquisite frost work formed by the spray, shines like burnished silver, with a beauty which is only rivaled by the foaming liquid silver below. This snowy wonder lasts all summer, defying even the hot suns of August.

From the ridge, the view is one of unequaled grandeur and sublimity. The west side of the basin is a mighty wedge of rock with the thin edge high in the air. Deep indentations, at nearly regular intervals, give it the appearance of a saw, or a gigantic comb with some of the teeth missing. Through these notches shines the wondrous blue Colorado sky. There is something sublime and almost awful, in the intense dark blue of this sky, which seems like a veil hung before the portals of eternity. To the north, east and south, from the head of this ridge may be seen one confusing jumble of peaks and ridges to the farthest extent of vision, which means in this clear atmosphere at least one hundred miles.

There are peaks of a cold gray color, peaks of a warm red that suggest "paint," peaks of yellow, peaks green with timber, peaks bare in naked majesty, peaks whose different formations give them a striped appearance like a convict's jacket; everywhere peaks and ridges, resembling a great stony sea, whose mighty waves have been suddenly stilled by a power that even the mountains must obey. These are no hillocks, like the Appalachians. There are several giants in sight, whose altitude is nearly fifteen thousand feet. Their tops stand far above the timber line, naked, storm-swept, and desolate. The sides of most of the mountains are very precipitous, and every rock, crevice or projection stands out startlingly distinct in the clear atmosphere. It is a common observation that this scenery is depressing. It reminds man of his own littleness.

Away off to the south on a distant ridge, stands a vast rock mass which exactly resembles a mediæval castle. One could sit and watch it almost expecting to see banners flung from its battlements and lofty towers, while doughty knights press on to the siege. Only the panoply of mediæval warfare is needed to carry us back to the days of the Crusaders.

On the east of this basin beyond a long ridge, is a parallel one with a steeper slope, at the head of which the mountain rises gradually in a broad meadow, free from large rocks. This wide expanse looks like an eastern pasture field, so inviting is its smooth outlines. The weary climber toils higher and higher up its sides in zig-zag lines until he reaches the top. Beware! The inviting smoothness of its sky line is deceitful. Scarce ten feet before you is a cliff that drops down sheer five hundred feet, and three thousand more in a dizzy slope of jagged, heaping rocks. Stand back, or this unexpected yawning gulf may set your brain in a giddy whirl. Away below, at least five thousand feet, is a lovely little valley inclosing several tiny lakelets, that resemble enormous green buttons on a buff garment. Out of this vale flows a streamlet so crooked that it knots itself up in the grass like a mighty serpent. Along the sides of the mountain wall may be seen in the accessible spots holes dug by the miners, for everything in this country is staked, except the clouds and the wraith-like columns of misty rain and snow, that pass in ghostly processions across the lofty peaks. Busy miners are boring this great wall full of holes in search of silver, and the stones turned loose by them go leaping down, down, down,

till they become mere specks in the distance, like fleeing rabbits.

Little Hackett and young Ward had for several days been prospecting this great ridge in search of mineral "float" that might indicate the presence of undiscovered leads. Contrary to the advice of Hackett, Ward resolved to climb over the precipitous cliff in a spot not far from where a zig-zag trail, itself dangerous, passed over the ridge into the basin to the north. He advanced cautiously along the side of the mountain, picking into the crevices and carefully examining the rock. Hackett, who sat on the ridge out of sight resting, suddenly heard a cry of horror. He ran to the edge of the cliff and looking over saw the body of his unfortunate companion plunging down the steep declivity, followed by a shower of bounding rocks. A loose stone had given way under his feet. Doubtless the first fatal plunge killed him instantly. The body plunged and rolled downward, at times slacking almost to a full stop at some ledge; then it started faster again, then dangled limp over some obstruction almost to a stop, only to pitch down the declivity with renewed speed, till a mangled mass, it stopped at the bottom, a mere black speck. Hackett turned away sick at heart. He could not bear to look. The suddenness of his companion's dreadful fate for a moment paralyzed his faculties. He seemed incapable of thinking or moving. Then he roused himself to the necessity of reporting the accident in camp. Arriving there he went at once to Ward's tent and related the terrible occurrence to the wretched mother and sister. It would serve no purpose to describe the scene that followed, were language adequate to depict such great and sudden affliction. The father was absent at work. They brought home the mangled body, and sympathizing miners prepared it for burial. His grave was the first in camp. He had come to the country in the vigor of youth seeking his fortune, only to be laid at rest in that lonely grave beneath the shade of the dark forest. With him were laid the fondest hopes of grief-stricken parents who had come to this land of silver to find only sorrow.

After this Little Hackett went prospecting no more. He spread a blanket on the warm ground near a patch of the beautiful bluebells where a spring gurgled down the hillside. Here he reclined and read, or wrote letters to his sister Mary and Aunt Rhoda. Norwell was very anxious about him.

Hackett could not help noticing this, and one day when they were alone, he said:

"Mr. Tom, I'm glad we came to Colorado."

"Why, Johnnie?"

"Oh, we'll make lots of money out of the Bismarck." Tom glanced at the wasted face and preternaturally bright eyes of the boy to see if he could catch any indication that the invalid was aware of his real condition. But the latter gave no sign.

"Hackett, sometimes I'm sorry you came with us."

"Am I too much trouble, Mr. Tom?"

"No," replied Tom hastily, "it's not that. You know I didn't mean that." Then there was an awkward pause. Each knew what the other was thinking about. At length Tom added, as if it was an afterthought, "it's too hard on you in this rough country, Johnnie."

"Never mind me, Mr. Tom. It's the rest of you boys that are having the hard work, while I sit in the sun and read, or watch the ground-squirrels and the butterflies. I wonder if butterflies are happy?"

"I think so. They have nothing to do but enjoy the sunshine."

"But then the damp nights come and chill them, and the frost soon stops their sailing among the flowers. 'Pears to me they have their share of trouble, too. Everything that we get that is worth having costs a heap of trouble." Then he added with sudden energy, "I shouldn't want to be a butterfly if I could. I want to be doing something useful, but it seems like I can't."

"When you get used to the mountains you'll get stronger and get your breath easier," replied Tom uneasily, hardly knowing how to divert the boy's thoughts from a subject which was to his robust nature peculiarly repulsive, the old, old story of death. The little brook gurgled in its narrow channel hidden by grass and rank weeds; the wind soughed and sighed in the tall spruces; a prowling "camp robber" perched on a tree scarce twenty feet away; but neither of the two human beings alone on the mountain side broke the silence for a minute or so. Then Little Hackett spoke as if he were just beginning the conversation:

"Mr. Tom, I'll never get my breath any easier, I guess. I've about give up thinking I can ever work my share in the Bismarck."

"Why Hackett," said Tom in surprise, as he caught a glimpse of the boy's secret trouble, "you've worked your share all along. Cooking and errands were your share, while we worked on the claim."

"But I can't do that any more. How long can a fellow hold his share without working before he loses it?"

"Now, Hackett, you mustn't think that way about your claim. We're working your share and shall do it. You take things easy and don't worry till you get better."

"I'll pay the boys all out of the ore when we get it."

"Yes, that's all right, Hackett. Did you hear from home to-day?" asked Tom, anxious to change the subject of conversation, and draw the boy's mind away from the gloomy topic on which it dwelt.

"Yes, the Mountain Queen boys brought a letter from Mary. She sends you her kind regards. Mr. Tom, I think you've been very good to me."

"Oh, that's all right. Let's not mention that."

"But I will. You paid my way out here. Then you and Mr. Wilson gave me a share in the Bismarck. I guess it's goin' to make us all rich. I'll not need it, maybe, but it will be so nice for Mary and Aunt Rhoda. Mary can quit the bindery and start a flower-shop or something." The boy's eyes lighted with the anticipation of the bright future in store for his dear ones at home, and a faint glow came to his wasted cheeks.

"Yes, and you'll cabbage many a buttonhole bouquet from her," said Tom, as he seized the axe and rushed out under pretense of getting stovewood. Outside he wiped a tear from his eye. He could not bear to keep up this conversation with his helpless friend, who now clearly realized that he must soon leave the boys to prospect for himself in an unknown land.

Work continued steadily on the Bismarck. Day by day it looked better. Daily miners came to see the rich lead which was now the talk of the camp. They all stopped to see the sick boy, who seldom left his sheltered spot on the blanket by the cabin. Hackett by his ramblings around the mountains was known to nearly all the miners in camp, and was a general favorite because of his intelligent conversation and winning ways.

The Long party still insisted that the Bismarck survey did not follow its lead, and that they could relocate the lode out-

side the claim limits if disposed to do so. Little attention was paid to this talk by the owners of the Bismarck beyond keeping a strict lookout for any underhanded schemes of the other party. The Stengels, who now thought they had a rich mine beyond question, boasted continually of its value, which they exaggerated in spite of the warnings of Norwell and Wilson. The Germans appeared loyal to their copartners in the Bismarck, but the fact that they were also partners with the Longs in the Yankee Doodle, was a constant source of distrust. Wilson especially, after his experience in the shaft on that terrible night, was not inclined to trust any stranger. He cautioned Norwell repeatedly against saying much about their mine or the late trouble. Norwell's impulsive wrath at Berry's supposed treachery had found free expression in terms not at all complimentary to the Long party. As a consequence, that party cordially disliked him, and spared no effort by ingeniously distorted explanations of the whole trouble to give Tom's remarks the appearance of wilful malice. The result was that two widely different views of the Bismarck troubles were held in camp.

It happened about this time that J. W. Tooke, the "Bullion King," stopped in Ruby Buttes for a day or two. He took frequent trips of the kind to the various mining camps of the State, looking after his numerous interests. His visit resulted in trouble. It was well known that Tooke was not at all scrupulous concerning the means by which he became possessed of mines. The chief point with him was to get them. As he had ample means to carry out any scheme he undertook, and never abandoned any pretension once made, except after the very last resort had failed, he was a dangerous man to encounter. The Long party now saw an opportunity. They had all along claimed that they were in Tooke's employ. After his departure they reported that he had looked over the ground with them, decided that the Bismarck was legally theirs, and advised them that they should at once take possession of it. He would back them to the full extent of his millions, and if need be, a sheriff's posse. Since it was well known that Tooke was a very unscrupulous man who relied on the efficacy of money and influence to accomplish any object whatever, this story obtained ready credence. Men were slow to take sides with the Bismarck owners, because by so doing they might bring down the wrath of the omnipotent "Bullion King" on their heads. It afterward appeared, how-

ever, that Tooke had never seen the Longs or the Bismarck either. They had hit upon this idea as a part of their own ingenious rascality.

The miner, Briggs, had thoughtlessly repeated his story of setting a stake on the Bismarck till it finally reached the Long brothers. They found his old stake, whittled off a clean place, wrote on it: "Relocated Aug. 20th, by W. Briggs, and Long Bros.," and set it by the Bismarck shaft. Honesty with many honest people is more of a sentiment than a principle. Briggs was apparently that sort of honest fellow. The Longs and their confederates had worked him up to the point of reasserting his claim while they went on the stake as backers. It was not hard to persuade him when a share in a rich mine was involved, especially since he had been swindled out of it by the Stengels. It was claimed that Briggs's ninety days' limit for working the assessment had only expired, and that the mine could now be relocated.

When Norwell, Wilson and Doffmeyer went to work that morning they found the Long party in possession of the Bismarck, the owners of which could not, without the assistance of the Stengels, work a night shift and keep continual possession. It was a complete surprise. The Bismarck boys did not even have their revolvers along. Lately there had seemed to be no necessity of constantly carrying these inconvenient weapons. Norwell and Wilson stood dumfounded. The jumpers were cool and guarded. They gave no hints of violence, but pointed to the stake and urged the validity of their claim. Wilson carefully inquired full particulars, for he at once realized the futility of violent measures. Briggs readily explained all the circumstances.

"But don't you think you have forfeited all your rights by allowing us to work here for several weeks without protest?" asked Wilson.

"I told you I had staked it."

"And you told us you resigned your claim," replied Tom. Dick Long, who was ringleader among the jumpers, then spoke up:

"Gents, there ain't no use argyin' this question. I reckon right's right an' law's law."

"Talk about law in this case," said Norwell, hotly. "You might as well mention honor among thieves."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Dick Long, bridling at once.

"I mean just this. You fellows have stolen this claim, or tried to. But you haven't got it yet. I have friends in this camp, and if friendship counts for anything I'll get you out of here if we have to kill every one of you."

"Try it. Mebbe you'd like to try it now," retorted the cowardly ruffian, who knew the other party were unarmed. "You rich fellers needn't think you kin come out here and rob poor men o' their rights. Because Briggs is a cripple you thought you could take his claim. Yer not foolin' with Briggs now. He's got backin'."

The Stengels, who had heard the dispute, now came up. They were in a perfect frenzy at the idea of losing the Bismarck. If the Long party had ousted only Norwell, Wilson and Doffmeyer, they would have cared little. They protested there was no stake on the claim when they set theirs. They first argued, then threatened, and finally begged. Dutch oaths and mangled English flowed promiscuously, but all to no purpose. The Long party were in possession and meant to stay there. Finally, Wilson said: "Gentlemen, there is a Miners' Union here. I am willing to submit my claim to their judgment and abide by the decision."

"And I'm much mistaken if they will countenance jnmping," said Norwell.

"Jest so, Captain," said Dick Long, with a sneer, "an' my opinion is you'll find yourself considered the meanest jumper in camp."

"I'm not asking your opinion."

The utmost the jumpers would consent to was the agreement to abide by the decision of the Miners' Union. This was no concession at all, for the other party could demand a decision without them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TRIAL IN THE ELK MOUNTAIN SALOON, WHEREIN THE FORCIBLE NATURE OF WESTERN ARGUMENTS IS ILLUSTRATED.—HACKETT'S SPEECH.

Norwell returned to the cabin in a condition bordering on despair. He feared the decision in advance, and had forebodings of failure to accomplish anything in mining. He had never known the want of money until lately. He could endure privation and toil so long as the incentive of a great reward was held out. For him pleasure in life was to be found chiefly in the good things which money would buy. To Wilson these things did not seem of the utmost moment; to Norwell they were everything. Without at least a competence, life would be to him a miserable delusion. What enjoyment could a man have if he must always be counting the cost of every little pleasure. Bacon, beans and soiled brown overalls seemed to satisfy Wilson as well as dainty vianda and broadcloth. At least he used them with indifference. Norwell, while he never complained, accepted these things with a constant protest which was too apparent. He had nourished the fond hope that they should all get rich from the Bismarck. Now that hope was blasted or endangered as suddenly as his father's wealth had flown. He must and would make money by some means. He needed it. Alice had written that she was copying lawyers' briefs for a living. Though she did not complain he knew it was hard work for small pay. He could not endure to see his sister who was reared to every luxury, suffer privation. Then there was Little Hackett's bitter disappointment in his last days. Norwell's impetuous nature rebelled against the injustice that pursued him, till he felt in moments of desperation like resorting to violent measures.

Wilson, who was equally indignant, adopted a wiser course. He urged the necessity of seeing their friends at once and explaining the whole difficulty, so that the miners could have time to think over the subject and see fully the extent

of the outrage attempted. They soon discovered that much precious time had already been lost, for the Long party had industriously circulated their version of the trouble and were sure of a full attendance of their adherents at the miners' meeting. They had spread far and wide such damaging reports of the Bismarck boys, and particularly Tom Norwell, that the more distant miners who knew nothing of the facts in the case, considered the latter an unprincipled jumper and an undesirable character. The Stengels were generally known to be unreliable, and their zealous work in their own behalf amounted to little.

The miners' meeting was called for the following Sunday, which was about the only day on which this busy community could be got together. Such things were managed with true democratic simplicity. Every miner could speak on the question and the interested parties could not only plead their own case but cast their votes also. The Union convened in the Elk Mountain saloon, which was the most suitable place because there was plenty of room. It was furthermore a neutral ground, not under anybody's influence, and perhaps, not least important, was the fact that liquid refreshments were at hand. These lubricated the wits of the rustler and set his judicial faculties in good running order. Texas Jack had exhibited a public spirit equal to the occasion by filling the bar room with seats made by placing rough boards on beer kegs. He had also at great expense, owing to the dispatch of a fast team for this special purpose, brought from the railway station of Dolorosa several kegs of fresh beer and a barrel of what purported to be old Kentucky whisky.

On this important occasion Jack combined an affable manner with the dignity which befitted so important a personage. With far more respect for the peace and welfare of the public than men engaged in his business usually show, Texas Jack had not published the fact that a special cargo of liquids had arrived. His design was to spring this important announcement on an appreciative and thirsty public as a pleasant surprise, after the labors of the court were ended.

The meeting was duly called to order by the chairman of the Union, about one hundred members being present. He briefly stated that the meeting had been called to decide the dispute between the rival claimants to the Bismarck lode. The Stengels were asked to give their statement as to the location. Herman Stengel rose and began:

"Gentlemen, dot Bismarck claim is mine, oont I can brove it."

"It's the facts in the case that we want, Mr. Stengel."

"Well, last spring early me an' Pob come ofer by King's Ranch mit shnow shoes. Dot shnow was so deep by dot trail a mule could drown himself unter it."

"We want to know how you staked the Bismarck."

"Mr. Chairman, I comes by dot shtake on te Bismarck right quick now. We carried in ofer our packs blankets, oont flour, oont picks, oont shofels, oont poolfer,—

"But the Bismarck is what we want to hear about," interrupted the persistent chairman.

"Gott in himmel, I don't haf time to git to dot shtake yet till I gits into camp. Pob oond me got here before dot shnow was melted till it was deeper als my head. We puilt a shanty py te basin, oond so help mine gott dere wasn't more as twenty miners by te whole Ruby Buttes."

"What time was that?"

"Dot was by April tent. We first builded a shanty. Dot took tree days. Den I went pack to King's Ranch for more flour."

"Skip the flour. When did you set the Bismarck stake?"

"Wen I come pack from King's Ranch Pob oont me went prospectin' up ofer te mountain ver te shnow was eferyvere teep as a house roof. So we set dot Bismarck shtake yoost right in dot shnow."

"On what date?"

"Dot was by der twentiet of Mai."

"Did you see any other stakes there?"

"So help mine gott I didn't."

Briggs was then called.

"When did you set your stake on the Bismarck?"

"I set a stake there May 20, and called the lead the 'Little Annie'."

"Did you see any other stake there?"

"I did not. There were no tracks on the snow, and no one had been there. Two weeks later I came along and found my stake thrown down the hill and the Bismarck stake set up."

"Did you give up your claim then?"

"I did not like to pull up their stake, because it's a penitentiary offense."

"But you gave them no notice."

"I always sort o' considered it mine."

"Did you do any work before your sixty days expired for beginning work?"

"I loosened some rocks the same day, but couldn't do much with a pick."

In answer to a question from Dick Long, Bob Stengel admitted that there was a mistake in Herman's testimony, for they had not located the Bismarck till May 28. But the Germans stoutly denied having removed the Little Annie stake. Unfortunately, the stake, which had been examined by three reliable, disinterested men, was weather-beaten and gave every evidence of being genuine. The Long party brought men to testify that the digging constituted a legal beginning of work. The Bismarck brought equally reliable men to show that it did not. Others testified that Briggs had himself admitted that he had abandoned all claim to the Bismarck. One fact was proved beyond dispute. The Stengels had fraudulently removed Briggs' stake, which was in itself a crime, and placed them in the light of jumpers. Jumping was a dangerous precedent. If countenanced it would put honest men at the mercy of roughs and desperadoes. It could not be tolerated. This fact alone told strongly against the owners of the Bismarck.

Finally, after all the interested parties and any others who wished to speak had been heard, the chairman announced that a ballot would be taken if there were no further remarks. Then George Mack, who was known to be a bosom friend of Wilson's, said he had a few words to add. Mack was a young man with a quick eye and a keen expression of countenance. He was a man who never engaged in disputes, and was evidently one not easily imposed on, and who could never be intimidated. He was a crack shot with the revolver, and could hit a spot the size of a silver dollar five out of six times at thirty paces. He was also a warm friend of Texas Jack. Mack began:

"Mr. Chairman and fellow miners of the Union, this is no common case we have met to try. It is not a case of out and out jumping. Other considerations appear. We should proceed with caution. There is no doubt that the Stengels fraudulently removed a stake and put theirs instead of it. That was a contemptible piece of work. But Norwell, Wilson, Doffmeyer and Hackett had no part in that. They came to camp and took hold of the claim in good faith and

made it worth something. Before they struck a good thing, nobody wanted it. Briggs has admitted that he had no further claims. These New Yorkers are honest men. Who are their opponents? Why didn't Long brothers set up Briggs' claim at first? Didn't they once lead a gang of jumpers in an attack on the Bismarck, when one man had an arm broken by a shot? Did they not set a fraudulent stake?"

"That's a lie," muttered Dick Long. Mack's face flushed, but he controlled himself and went on:

"Dick Long, this is no place for a private quarrel. We are trying to settle a dispute of public interest. Will you and your party stand up here and swear that the stake of the pretended Tooke lode was genuine? If it was, why didn't you stay by it and die by it like honest men?"

"What do you mean by honest men?" blustered Dick. "My character is about as good as yourn, I reckon."

"If you bring yourself into a dispute like this your character and motives must weigh against the character and motives of the other side. But the less said about that the better. I knew you at Argenta, Dick Long."

"Well, what if you did!" growled Long, sullenly. The chairman now called both gentlemen to order, and told Mack he must confine his remarks more closely to the case.

"I have only a few words more. That jumping case at the Bismarck cabin was an outrage. It never should have been allowed in this camp." Here he was interrupted by growls of disapprobation from the Long party, who for some reason were nearly all on one side of the room by themselves, facing the bar. "I'm aware," said Mack, deliberately looking at the other party, "that it may be dangerous to express such opinions, but I am responsible, and you all know where to find me. Then there is that strange affair in which Mr. Wilson nearly lost his life in the shaft. We all know that he suffered more than death that night. Nobody may be to blame, but all I've got to say is it looks suspicious. Are we going to deprive square, honest men of their rights because others want to take what is not their own? I think not. I appeal to the honor of this crowd. I hope we may do the right thing." Norwell and Wilson had agreed that Mack should plead their case so far as anything beyond a mere question of dates and facts went. When the speaker sat down there was apparently nothing more to be said.

The case was now ready for this rather numerous popular

jury of slouchy miners. The chairman explained that all who believed that the Long party, who were now in possession of the Bismarck, under the title Little Annie, were entitled to the claim, should vote "Yes." All who favored the other party should vote "No." Bits of blank paper were distributed, and two miners passed around with hats collecting the ballots. Everybody was supposed to be entitled to vote, for the entire community was by virtue of residence interested in mining affairs.

Ninety votes were cast, and the result was a tie. As the chairman had already voted in the capacity of a member, he was unable to cast the decisive vote. Then it was found that Little Hackett had not voted. The poor sick boy had managed to walk down town to attend the trial. He had been obliged to take frequent rests and lean heavily on Norwell for support. He was keenly interested in the result, for if it went against his party Mary's fortune would melt away and he must die without the comfort of knowing that he had in any way assisted the loved ones whom he should never see again. He had sat intently listening to all that was said until the time came for a vote. His wasted features lighted with hope when he heard Mack's short argument, which seemed to the boy thoroughly convincing. He little knew how hard it is to convince men who have already made up their minds to perpetrate or abet a wrong. Though Hackett had attained the years of manhood, he was still so thoroughly a child in thought and habit that it had not occurred to him that he was entitled to vote.

Hackett's vote would change the result. Dick Long made objection to his voting with a sneer about boys, and he "reckoned dead men would be votin' next." This brutal allusion was met by such unqualified disapproval that Long quickly withdrew his objection. Hackett was interested in a claim, and was in consequence clearly entitled to vote. Then objection was made to the vote of Texas Jack. "On what grounds do you object?" inquired that gentleman, with a dangerous expression in his quick, restless eyes.

"Because ye're not a miner, or interested in any claims," answered Dick Long. The chairman asked Jack to explain whether this were the case. "No, gentlemen, I'm not a miner. I don't own any interest in this camp. I did own half on one stake, but the cussed thing wasn't worth anything, so I gave it away to a tenderfoot that I had a sort of

grudge against. I see men here voting though, who never swung a pick in their lives. They run stores in town and vote in the Miners' Union because they're 'grub staking' some fellow to tramp round the hills. I voted because I was one of the first comers here and I thought I had a right to —and because I wanted a square deal." Nevertheless, it was the general opinion that Jack could not vote. Finally, Shorty rose to enlighten the meeting as to the custom in such cases in the San Juan country.

"I tell yer what it is boys, it's not so much whether Jack kin vote or not, as whether jestice is goin' to fall to the ground. If jestice falls to the ground we might as well close up the camp and quit, for no man's claim's goin' to be wuth a cuss." Shorty spoke of justice as if the allegorical female with the bandage on her eyes was wandering around the mountains in imminent peril of stumbling over a good-sized precipice. "I've two claims in the San Joo-an that's worth a hundred thousand apiece"—there was laughter and cries of, "Oh, give us a rest, Shorty," with similar expressions of approval or disapproval, according to the mood of the individual. "It's a fact boys, and I'd give 'em both up freely, an' not whine about it ether, ruther'n see jestice fall to the ground. Do you know, feller miners, what we did when the Jinkins gang tried to jump the Flapjack lode in the San Joo-an?" (Cries of, "No, let's have it.") "Waal, we jest ordered 'em to git off'n that claim, or, if they didn't, we'd make 'em. Damn me if they wern't sassy, and said we dassen't touch 'em. But they missed their guess, for we das. Twenty-five of us went up to their cabin with rifles to reason with 'em, for we 'lowed to give 'em another chance. Bill Jinkins had a Sharpe's rifle, Californy Jake had a double-bar'led shot-gun plumb-full o' buckshot, an' the rest of the outfit had nothin' but Colt's revolvers. Waal, when a skunk gits under the house you've uther got to git him out or move the house. So as we couldn't move the Flapjack mine we reckoned we'd have to move the skunks. They peppered us lively. One man dropped right in his tracks, and never as much as hollered, an' two or three were grazed with bullets, but that never budged the course of jestice. We jist took out the hul outfit an' strung 'em up in a row to the rafters of a vacant house. That was the slickest job ever I seed in twenty years' prospectin', Thar they hung as lovely as chickens in a huckster's shop, feet all jist so far from the ground, fur we took a heap o' pains

with 'em. The Jinkins boys was at the head of the row an' Californy Jake at the foot. Everybody thought Jake 'ud do better in life than to wind up at the foot, fur he was a 49-er an' desarved better things. Some of us thought he ought to be at the head of the line, but poor Jake was not in luck, an' had to fall in at the foot. But he was a trump for all that. When we was ready to histe up the Jinkins boys the box that Bill stood on, he was fust, broke down, an' the delay sort of worried Bill till we give him a pull at a brandy flask. Then Californy Jake spoke up, as he handed back a plug o' tobacker he borryed o' me, an' says he: 'Shorty, if you'll run over to my cabin you'll find a cut off'n a pine log that I use for a cheer. I reckon it'll be about the thing.' It was jist the thing, fur we worked off the hul six so there want a quarter of an inch difference in the height of their toes from the ground. We let 'em hang all day fur we hated dreadful bad to spile sich a purty sight. People come fur miles to see 'em, an' everybody 'lowed it was the neatest thing ever done in the Territory, and purty nigh come up to the old times in Californy.

"Now, the pint I'm gittin' at boys, is first, what oughter be done with jumpers? Second, what sort o' men oughter vote? In the Flapjack case we had tenderfeet, capitalists, gamblers, an' durn me, if the editor didn't go 'long, though I reckon his motives wasn't jest right, because he wanted the news fur his paper. But I tell yer when a man makes a squar deal, who has any right to ax his motives? Now, I claim a gambler is jest as good as the rest of us. I mean as a citizen, of course, and not from a church standpint. As long as he does the squar thing I'm willin' to acknowledge him as an ekal." Here Shorty stopped and looked at Texas Jack to see how the allusion was received. That worthy's face was wreathed in smiles. The company was in high good humor, and willing to hear Shorty to the end, for he had as yet committed himself distinctly to neither party in this great oratorical effort, the greatest of his life. He mopped his copper-colored face on a greasy, red, flowered, cotton handkerchief, which he wore only on important occasions, and continued, amid cries of "Go in, Shorty," "Don't git off your lead," "That's rich truck you're sortin' now," etc., "I hain't much more truck to sort, boys, but it'll run way up in the thousands. Here's Texas Jack is a good citizen of this place. He's a nateral gentleman. He deals his cards squar, an' has only four aces in a pack. He keeps good whisky, too, though twenty-

five cents is a leetle steep for a drink, 'cordin' to my tell. But *he* can't help that. He goes by the market. He sets out big glasses, none of yer cussed little thimble affairs, an' (here Shorty lowered his voice for his crowning argument) he looks tother way when a feller's fillin' up. Now, I call that the mark of a nateral gentleman. It's a shame to keep such a man from votin.' He ought ter be allowed to vote unanimous."

Shorty had now squarely committed himself. He was against the Long party, and moreover, by implication advocated hanging them. At once there was a commotion, during which Shorty sat down.

After some discussion, the question of Texas Jack's right to vote was put, and by a good majority was decided adversely, on the ground that he was clearly not a miner. If Hackett voted and Texas Jack did not, there would still be a tie. It was noticed that the ringleaders of the Long party kept their eyes fastened on the door continually. This was now explained, as was their patience at Shorty's rambling speech. One of the Long party who had two hours before been sent out hurriedly to bring in two absentees, now returned with the men. Dick Long demanded another vote, which was taken. Two or three weak-kneed individuals who feared the Longs and Tooke's influence, changed sides, and the vote showed a majority of five against the Bismarck party. When the result was announced by the chair, Dick Long jumped on a seat and cried out in triumph, "Who's going to take your San Juan medicine now, Shorty?"

"Dick Long, don't you crow. Many a rooster has crowed jist afore his neck was wrung."

"What do you mean by that, you old blackguard?"

"Look here, Dick Long, you'd better keep a civil tongue in your head. You an' your party here won this 'ere case, though I don't see no sort of jestice in it. Jestice has fell to the ground, 'cordin' to my idee. Her lead seems to be sort o' pinchin' out in this camp, and fetchin' up in an all-fired mean horse o' country rock, but some of us boys is goin' to lay low and watch her, an' see if she don't come in agin' a thousand dollars to the ton, an' six feet wide."

"Shorty, if your word was worth a cent you'd git into trouble," growled the ruffian, who still carried his arm in a sling from the effects of the ball received at the attack on the Bismarck. "It's a good thing for you that nobody pays any

attention to yer lyin' an' braggin'." The miners now quietly took sides, for everybody saw that the Long party were ripe for a row.

"I reckon I don't always tell the exact truth to a notch," answered Shorty, slowly. "But it ain't expected of a man who's rustled all his life, fur it's his way, an' he don't know when he is lyin'. Sometimes men who wear a biled shirt don't hit the bull's-eye every shot when truth's consarned. But I jist want to say this one thing,"—here Shorty drew up his heavy-set frame a trifle, with a look of determination that was surprisingly at variance with his ordinary easy manner, —"when this camp wants Dick Long an' his gang to run it, the camp'll notify 'em. An' I'll say besides to Mister Dick Long an' the rest of his jumpers, that I've seed many a dangerouser man buried with his boots on, an' I've helped to hang better men."

"You old villain, I won't be abused any longer," exclaimed Dick Long, as he drew a heavy "44." But Shorty had not rustled twenty years in vain. His stubby old pistol, a counterpart of himself, appeared from his hip pocket in a twinkling, and the muzzle of the ugly weapon was dangerously close to Long's nose. That gentleman had calculated on getting the drop, but was not quick enough. A score of weapons were drawn instantly, and the ominous click, click, click of their hammers was heard on every side. Texas Jack, seizing the revolver from the shelf, cleared the bar at a bound, exclaiming:

"Gents, I guess a man can take part in a row in his own place, if he can't vote. This thing has gone far enough." Then addressing Dick Long, he said with an air that admitted of no doubt concerning his intentions: "I'll kill the first man that shoots. I'll have no row here."

"Let's clean out his old place," said some one in the rear. Here Hackett, to the surprise of everybody, rose and rushed between the two files of scowling, threatening men.

"Mr. Jack, please don't shoot." The boy was fairly trembling with excitement, and for the space of half a minute could not utter a single word. He seemed totally oblivious to fear, in fact, unconscious of danger. Then collecting his thoughts, he began slowly: "It's an awful thing to take human life. I wouldn't do it for all the silver in the world. I was part owner in the Bismarck, but I don't want it if blood has to be shed. And I don't want it if it isn't ours honestly.

"Mr. Tom," he said, appealing to Norwell, whom, in spite of the events of the day, he evidently considered the most important personage present, "don't have any row. If the claim isn't ours we don't want it. I counted on it a good deal because it would give Mary enough so she wouldn't have to work. But that isn't to be. I suppose," he continued sadly, "she can work just as she always has. For my part, I'll never need it. I'd like it for Mary's sake, but I shouldn't feel easy if it was blood money." The leveled pistols dropped one by one, and a dead silence prevailed. "Mr. Tom, give it up. There are plenty more claims somewhere else. There's no use fighting, and struggling and doing wrong for a little money that may be we couldn't use right if we had it. The strong get the money and the weak have to do without it. But if there's no reckoning in this world there is in the next, and riches wont count there. Dick Long, maybe your side is right. Any way, you've got the Bismarck and you're welcome to Mary's share. I won't say I think you cheated us, because I don't see how forty or fifty men could find it in their hearts to cheat an orphan girl who has had to work for her living. So I guess your case must be right, if I don't see it that way. Anyhow if it isn't, God will make it all right sometime, and Mary can afford to wait. Now, Mr. Jack, please don't make any fuss."

There was a dead silence in the room, for Little Hackett spoke as if with the voice of inspiration. After a brief pause, during which the last pistol disappeared, Jack said kindly:

"No, Hackett, there'll be no row here to-day."

The miners filed out, one by one, expressing in low tones their sympathy for Hackett, and regretting the unfortunate turn affairs had taken.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEATH OF LITTLE HACKETT.

The decision in the Bismarck case was strictly legal, and was acquiesced in, though there were many expressions of doubt as to its fairness. Like many decisions of higher courts it was thought to represent law rather than justice.

There were in particular many expressions of sympathy with Hackett and his sister. Had his case been fully understood it doubtless would have changed the result. There was scarcely a man in camp who would not do anything in his power to alleviate the sufferings of the sick boy, who was now unable to leave his bed at the cabin by the lake. Norwell and Wilson wished to take him down to the town where he could be made more comfortable, but he steadily refused. He loved the sublime scenery of the mountain. His bed was placed so he could get the warm noonday sun and look out at the flitting butterflies, the sleepy camp-robbers that hung around the cabin, and the beautiful fresh bluebells whose tiny cups dangled in profusion from graceful stems. Beyond rose the grand old peak far into the mysterious sky.

The party had no regular work. Tom spent nearly all his time at the cabin looking after Little Hackett. He tried to be cheerful as he used to be for the sake of the poor invalid. But his nature had lost its spontaneous sunshine. He keenly felt the wrong that had deprived him of a valuable property. His heart was set on making money. Money he must have by some means, or life would prove a miserable failure. He could never be satisfied with poverty. It was in opposition to all his notions of usefulness and enjoyment in life. It might do for those who were satisfied with it, but he rebelled utterly at the thought of grubbing each day for mere food and clothing. Better not exist at all. With Hackett's consent, Norwell wrote to Mary that her brother had not long to live. It was sad news to break to the anxious ones at home, but Tom had previously written Mary that the climate did not seem to agree with John, and that his health was not at all good. Then it occurred to him to write to Miss Ingledee, and ask her for old acquaintance sake to be kind to the bereaved ones. Now, when he thought of the subject; he wondered that he had not written to her sooner. Their acquaintance was of such long standing and had been so intimate, that it seemed almost as natural to write to her as to his sister Alice. But he had left New York with a feeling almost of hatred toward the place and its associations. Now, since his brief dream of silver was over, his thoughts returned more pleasantly to old friends and old associations.

Wilson and the Expert having nothing else to do went prospecting daily. There were still rumors that the Bismarck was not surveyed on its lead. The change of owners had not

succeeded in quieting these rumors. There was also another claim on the hill, called the "Silver Star," running parallel with the Bismarck. This claim had recently "struck it rich," and miners were flocking to see its rich ore. An Eastern capitalist had offered two hundred thousand dollars for the Silver Star and the Bismarck together, though neither had yet shipped any ore. A mill run from each, had, however, shown ore of a very high grade. Now, by a strange coincidence, the Silver Star was reported to be off its lead in a manner similar to the Bismarck. The owners of an adjoining worthless claim were industriously digging the woods full of ditches trying to discover the rich vein of their neighbors, but they had not succeeded as yet.

One day Bob Stengel came to Norwell at the cabin when only himself and Hackett were present, and had a very important communication to make. In an opposite direction from that of the men who were prospecting, on a narrow slip of vacant ground he thought he had discovered the Silver Star lode. Meantime the owners of that claim were about to change their survey to the direction in which their vein really ran. This bit of information was obtained by eavesdropping. A new stake set on this vacant ground would hold a large part of their lead. Bob was enthusiastic. He and his brother would have set a stake at once had they not been afraid to do so alone.

"Mr. Norwell, dot's te piggest pisness in te whole camp. I'd shtake it all mineself mit Herman, but mine gott! it takes a toozen men to hold on mit a claim in dis camp. You oont Mr. Wilson come in oont we yoost got four mans. Dot's better tan me oont Herman." Norwell listened with interest. Here was a chance to recover lost ground. If mining was a grab game, why not grab with the others?

"Stengel, are you sure it is a good thing?"

"Well I should say so. Wy dot lode bin as wide as dis cabin, oont ruby silver in it yoost the size like plums."

"And you think it is the Silver Star?"

"Ya!"

"Are you sure the ground is vacant?"

"Herman oont me sighted it mit a shtick."

"I'll go over and look at it." Hackett had been listening to every word of this conversation with keen interest. He said:

"Mr. Tom, look at it carefully."

"Why, Hackett?"

"Because, if it's the Silver Star lode it don't 'pear fair to take it just because they made a mistake in their survey." Norwell reflected a moment in silence, then said, though it cost an effort:

"No, Stengel, I'll not do it. The Silver Star boys are good fellows. They've worked hard on their claim. Let them change their survey and take what rightfully belongs to them."

Stengel could neither understand nor appreciate such honesty in the face of sore temptation. He came to Norwell and Wilson because he could rely upon them. A dozen men could easily be found to join for the asking. He stood amazed, and acted as if he had not fully understood Tom's answer.

"Oont you wasn't goin' in mit me oont Herman?"

"Stengel, it isn't square. I can't do it."

"Not shquare!" said Bob, in astonishment. "Mine gott! Dot peats anything I efer heard in my life. I comes to you yoost to gif you a goot ting oont you kicks it right flat ofer. Tom Norwell, you are te piggest fool in camp. You'll nefer make a shtrike," saying which Mr. Bob Stengel left the cabin pitying the man who engaged in the mining business without first getting rid of his conscience, if he chanced to possess any such inconvenient furniture.

The excitement of that scene in the Elk Mountain saloon had completely unnerved Little Hackett, and he rapidly sank till he was unable longer to leave his bed. He lay by the cabin door, and Tom Norwell, who never left him now, sat on a spruce block by the bedside, and read to the dying boy or talked about the friends in New York. A letter had been received from Mary, in the tear-blurred pages of which she resigned herself to the great sorrow which had cast its shadow before, and which was many fold greater because the poor sick boy must die far away in the mountains without the ministering hands of kindred, and without the tender care of woman. Two or three of the women in camp had called several times to see the invalid, but as it was a long, tiresome walk from the village up to the cabin by the lake, anything like regular attendance or watching must be left to his partners. Hackett still refused to be moved down to the town. He had become attached to the scenery, and he could there enjoy the bright sunlight and the beautiful flowers.

The boy's face became so thin that it was painful to look

upon. His sunken eyes shone with brilliancy, and a hectic flush at times tinged the pallid countenance. He was literally wearing out without any special disease, or rather he was burning out in this stimulating, electrical atmosphere. His heart beat irregularly, and at times threatened to suffocate him by its throbbing. Mary wrote every day, but owing to the uncertainty of the mails in this remote region, the letters sometimes came two or three in one day, with corresponding intervals without any. Tom was glad to see that the resigned Christian spirit of Mary's letters cheered the last moments of the dying boy, who had feared at first that she might take it very hard. He had asked Tom to write, saying it made little difference where one died, the only question of moment was how. Aunt Rhoda was less resigned, and still insisted on prescribing heroic remedies suited to the robust frame of a man taken with a temporary attack of sickness. Tom's reply was always that everything was being done which medical skill could accomplish. This was strictly and pathetically true, for the only physician in the place had said from the start that nothing could be done except to make as easy as possible the short path to the grave.

Daily the sun swung above the rounded dome of Mount Carbon to the east, and poured a flood of light into the valleys and along the hillsides beyond. Daily, the little brook that gurgled deep among the bluebells diminished in volume as the dry season advanced. Its life, too, was fast nearing the end. Day by day the great snow-field on the big peak in the west grew less and less till now at this distance it seemed no larger than a garden spot, though really covering several acres. Daily the canary-colored butterflies flitted in the sun or perched on the rosin-scented foliage. Every day the sleepy camp-robber, which had now become Hackett's constant companion, sat on a limb patiently waiting the chance to steal a biscuit or forage in the stewed peaches. He never uttered a note. He was a fitting witness of the solemn scene about to be enacted. The ubiquitous little chipmunks skurried hastily along the dry logs, or squatted on their hind legs to take observations. No one disturbed them, and they, too, were silent.

One day as Norwell, Wilson and Doffmeyer finished their dinner, Hackett spoke to Norwell in a feeble voice:

"Mr. Tom——"

"What is it, Johnnie?"

"Maybe the boys had better not go prospecting this afternoon." Tom gave Wilson a meaning look, and replied:

"They'll not go if you wish it, Hackett."

"It's lonesome here, sometimes. I'll not ask them to stay in often."

"Hackett," said Wilson, "Doffmeyer and I will stay round the cabin to-day, and get some wood. We'll be in and out all day. We'll not go any more if you are lonesome."

A smile lit up the wasted features of the dying boy, who felt he had all the time been a burden on these men, and yet had received nothing but kindness from them. Doffmeyer sat down by the bedside, and tried to tell Hackett how they mined for gold in the Black Hills. His stories had always interested the boy, but in the middle of it he found that Hackett was not listening, or even cognizant of his presence. He rose and walked outside, with the silent, measured step that befits the house of death. Presently Hackett opened his eyes and asked:

"Mr. Tom, do you think Mary is at work in the bindery to-day?"

"Yes, I think she is."

"She wouldn't work if she knew."

"The work doesn't make any difference, Hackett," said Norwell, in a tremulous tone, while he strove to appear calm.

"No, she's thinking of me, any way." There was a pause, in which the only audible sound was a faint gurgling from the brook a few rods away. This seemed to catch Hackett's ear, and he continued: "Is the snow all gone from the peaks, yet?"

"From all but the big peak. There's some there yet."

"I'd like to go up and get some—I'd like to say I tasted snow in August."

"The boys will go and get you some."

"No, it wouldn't be so nice if I didn't get it myself." There was a brief pause, then he went on with an effort: "Mr. Tom, please look if my water-wheel is running yet out by that tall spruce." Tom Norwell went outside to see if the wheel was going. He called in Wilson and Doffmeyer.

"Yes, it's still going, Johnnie."

"I never thought it would last longer than I did," he replied, with a faint smile. "Did you, Mr. Tom?"

Not a word was said in answer, as the three strong men stood with bowed heads and moistened eyes. Suddenly a

dull, heavy "boom" rang out on the hillside, and echoing among the mountains, came back from the other side of the gulch. Little Hackett tried to raise his head. Tom instantly raised it till he could look out of the cabin door. The sick boy feebly inquired:

"Is that in the Bismarck?" then settled back on his blanket pillow.

"Yes. They're working it day and night."

"Mr. Tom, don't you and the boys worry about the Bismarck. I was sorry for the boys—and for Mary—I didn't see why the innocent should lose all they had. But it's all right. It came to me since as clear as day that God hadn't intended us to have the Bismarck at all, or else he took it away from us because we got too proud." There was a pause as the invalid rested from his exertion of speaking. Then he went on: "But He'll give you all something better than the Bismarck if you only wait,"—and he added in a low, solemn voice—"Mr. Tom, don't worry. Give Him time and He'll do the fair thing." Tom replied with as much sincerity as he could assume:

"Why, I don't care a straw about the Bismarck, neither do the boys."

"I don't. I did at first, but now it seems to me somehow as if I had struck it rich at last. I feel so happy." Another pause. Tears were now coursing down more than one bronzed cheek. "Mr. Tom, it was good of you to bring me here."

"That is not worth speaking of."

"Yes, it is. I always wanted to travel. If Mary could only see these grand mountains I'd be still happier." Hackett, nearly exhausted by his great efforts, sank in a brief slumber, or rather into a condition of unconsciousness resembling sleep. Still the three men stood motionless and silent. The end was near at hand, for a clammy sweat was gathering on the pinched nose and colorless ears. Finally, Hackett roused himself and tried to speak. Norwell leaned over and caught the almost inarticulate words:

"Mr. Tom, remember Mary and Aunt Rhoda. They'll be lonesome. Will you go to see them sometimes?"

"Yes, yes, Hackett, I will."

"Tell them I was happy—is it getting dark?"

"No, the sun is just going over the mountain."

"Then it will be light on the other side when I get there—

Wilson—Doffmeyer." They came closer and leaned over him. "Don't fret over the Bismarck. You will strike it sometime." The dying boy sank back exhausted, and again the only sound was that of the brook. Presently he roused himself and said so low that his voice was scarcely audible:

"Is the camp-robber still there on the tree?"

"Yes, he is sitting on the old stump."

"Please don't let the boys hurt him."

"We'll be kind to him."

"It was good of him to sit in the tree where I could see him. Now, I'm going. I'm not tired any more. Do you see that big mountain, boys, right off there? There's a big lead running right up to the top of it." The eyes grew fixed and filmy. Tom felt the pulse, which was now scarcely perceptible, and then laid the wasted hand mechanically on the blanket. "It's a good lead. Every rock sparkles with pure gold," came in a whisper. A look of complete happiness settled over the features. The breath no longer came in gasps, but with longer inspirations and intervals which looked like death. The men waited the end in silence. Again the lips parted:

"I'm going to claim it—tell Mary." The breathing ceased. The features settled into a calm repose. The spirit of Little Hackett had followed that golden lead over the range into that mysterious country unexplored by man, whence no prospector ever returns.

Norwell and Wilson set about performing the last rites of the dead. A letter was written to Mary, and Doffmeyer was to take it to the postoffice and inform the people of the town. As no coffin could be obtained, a carpenter was employed to make one out of spruce lumber. Hackett had been a general favorite, and it was decided on all hands that he should have a proper funeral. As there was no minister nearer than twenty or thirty miles, and as he might hesitate about such a long tiresome journey over mountain roads to attend a funeral, it was decided to dispense with his services. Texas Jack was the best educated man in the community, and as one miner expressed it, "could read better nor any parson." But from the nature of his calling there was a manifest impropriety in his conducting the services, even if he could be prevailed upon to do so. It was unanimously agreed that, while his reading would do anywhere, his prayer wouldn't assay high enough. Praying men of any sort were exceed-

ingly scarce, and men who could pray in public were not known to exist, though it is impossible to tell what may be discovered by sifting the motley material of a new mining camp. You may discover a poet, whose thoughts wander among iambics while his tired arms swing the sledge to the monotonous clink of the drill. His partner, who keeps alternate stroke, may have been a cowboy from the great plains of Texas, while the man at the drill, spattered with mud from head to foot, may have once measured silks and laces over the counter for fine ladies. The genius in greasy brown duck who presides at the windlass and casts a feverish, eager eye on the ore as it slowly rises into the light to catch a glimpse of ruby or brittle silver, or sulphurets, may have been a theological student, who once aspired to raise souls, by a spiritual windlass, from away down at the three-thousand-foot level of sin up to the broad platform of salvation. A committee waited on Texas Jack to consult about the funeral and see if he had any suggestions to offer. Secretly they nourished the ulterior motive of asking Jack to read a chapter. If they failed in the matter of prayer reading would be better than nothing, and express the sympathies of the miners as well as the elaborate and doubtful "funeral sermon" of older communities.

"You see, Jack," said the chairman, "we oughter try'n get up a boss funeral for Little Hackett. I reckon he deserves it better'n any man who ever sot foot in camp."

"Yes, we must do the square thing by Hackett," said Jack, reflectively.

"But how? that's the pint. There hain't no preacher short o' Dolorosa, an' they say he works on his own claim all week an' sort o' sinks a salvation shaft among sinners on Sunday. I reckon it's hardly a fair shake to ask him to come so far."

"We'll make him up a purse if that's all."

"Yes, that's easy anuff, but I've heerd he's desprit busy, an' then his pard couldn't do much while he was gone. The season's gittin' late, an' it's no fool of a job sinkin' a shaft in the snow. I reckon we needn't try to work that lead." Then there was a pause, and the speaker continued, "Jack, I've got an idee." He waited for Jack's approval before disclosing the nature of his idee which, from his manner, was evidently of importance.

"Well?"

"Do it yourself, Jack," he said, leaning forward over the counter confidentially.

"Oh, h—l!" Jack laughed heartily at the idea of his officiating as minister at a funeral. Then his manner suddenly changed and he assumed a look of dignity which well became his handsome person and said: "See here, this is no subject for jesting. What do you mean by it?"

"Jack, I wasn't jokin', pon honor I wasn't. You know you've the best larnin in camp."

"But I'm only a saloon keeper and a gambler. No, it wouldn't look respectful, and besides," he added with sudden energy, "d—n it I tell you I can't pray." After this convincing argument, there was no need to discuss longer that part of the programme which referred to prayer. But the miner stuck to his point.

"As fur gamblin' I reckon that isn't right, but jest sposin' a man's bad, as I reckon we three all be beyont a doubt, sposin' I say, a bad man does a good turn, I reckon the Lord ain't goin' to kick him fur it. We're in a pinch in this camp; an' I 'low when a man's in a pinch the Lord'll figger the chances he had alongside o' what he did. See here, Jack, I 'spose, considerin', it's best to cut the prayer, but we thought you could read a sam anyway, fur we know you kin read beautiful." Jack stood silent for a moment.

"I'll do it if it is the wish of the camp."

"We knowed you were open to reason, Jack," said the spokesman, with a laugh that hardly comported with the solemnity of his errand. "We knowed you wouldn't go back on the camp because it was in a pinch."

In this cosmopolitan community, where democratic principles reigned supreme, it might be supposed that there would be little trouble in finding an active Christian who could perform, after a fashion at least, the funeral rites of the dead. But true Christianity is a flower of sweet perfume and modest growth. Professing Christians were few in camp, and of these few, none had the confidence in themselves required to come forward and volunteer their services on this occasion. After a few moments' reflection Jack broke the silence:

"Boys, I know a man who can pray. Old Jim Gurley."

"Jim Gurley a prayin' man! well, I'll be ——." The miner stopped suddenly and most reverently, for he recollected that it was almost sacrilege to swear pending the obsequies of the dead boy.

"Why Jack, that idee struck me as sudden as a giant cap bustin'. Ain't you mistaken about Jim Gurley? Why the old

cuss!" The chairman started. This time he had come pretty near swearing.

"No, I've heard him praying in his tent."

"Then I'll tell you how we'll fix it, you'll read a sam an' we'll git Jim Gurley to offer prars."

"Don't you think he could read too?" said Jack, who only consented to read at all under a strong sense of respect to the memory of Hackett in this case of necessity. But the committee would not excuse Jack till they got Gurley. They went to Gurley and with much persuasion induced him to consent to pray. He was an illiterate East Tennessean, but a devout Christian, and ready to follow duty when she beckoned him to untried paths.

"I'm not much on prar," he said, "but I 'low I kin scrouge through somehow."

Everything was ready for the funeral; the corpse having been packed down the mountain on a donkey, was lying in the hotel. The procession started from there, and the whole town turned out. The rough miners filed by in silence to take a last look at the wasted features of the dead, the women of the place mingling with the men around the bier. Beside the coffin was placed a cross made of the sweet wild flowers which Hackett had loved so well. Four stalwart miners who, by the simple process of stripping off their brown overalls and coats, had appeared in their Sunday clothes, acted as pall bearers. Slowly and solemnly this procession of rough men, two by two, passed down the rocky street, across the little creek, and up the sloping point where the grave had been dug beside Ward's, under the shadow of the great spruces that bordered the little park. Norwell and Wilson walked first behind the coffin as chief mourners. Then came Texas Jack and Jim Gurley. As the coffin was lowered into this lonely grave on the mountain side, though a community reverently paid its respects to the dead, there were no tears except from Tom Norwell. There were no kindred present, no despairing sobs of bereaved relatives. The respect of the stranger was genuine, but the real mourners were two lonely women in a distant city. In a slow, labored manner Gurley read the comforting words of the twenty-third Psalm. His earnest prayer was short, rude, and fervent:

"Oh, Lord, we have met to burry one who was but yisterday our brother. Let them that's left be reminded that life

is short, an' there are a thousand ways leadin' to sin, but only one little narrer lead to glory. Lord, thou knows better than all us our sins an' shortcomins'. Thou reads us like plain print, an' knows that we're mean an' ornery, an' not fit to live another minnit if jestice was done. But don't be too hard on us. Let the Spirit rastle with us a little longer, and make us strong to resist Satin, who tempts us from bad to wuss day an' night. Make us strong to resist him, for he's scrougin' us inch by inch toward the awful cliff that stands over the burnin' lake. Oh, Lord, if it is thy will, let Satin be confounded and confused. Let thy grace shine onto these poor miserable worms that are diggin' the arth for silver an' neglectin' their immortal souls. 'Sposen we strike it rich here an' have no stake sot over thar. A stake over thar's what we want, where no jumper can come anigh, an' every nugget is simon pure gold. Let the one who has gone afore us be an example of good deeds. May we foller in his footsteps. Oh, Lord, don't forgit his poor folks in their loss, an' don't forgit all us poor miserable worms that have been workin' our own claims, an' lettin' yourn go without even assessment. We know we're mean and ornery, an' no 'count, so we leave all to thy overshadderin' mercy. Don't let us go on till our vein pinches clear out in a seam of sin at the place where there's weepin' and wailin', but save us before it is forever too late, an' thine be the glory."

Two young men, who happened to be able to sing, sang the "Sweet By-and-By," and the assemblage dispersed. One more person, who had come to this land of gold and silver, seeking the riches of earth, had passed to that resting place where the pauper sleeps as sweetly as the millionaire. The funeral was over, the last rites of respect had been performed in the best manner possible, the miners scattered to their claims, and soon the hills again resounded as before, with the heavy reports of exploding dynamite. Life is so busy that it has scarcely time for death, as the ages crowd into eternity.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BIG STRIKE ON THE AMAZON.

After the funeral no prospecting was done by Norwell and Wilson for several days. They were apathetic and discouraged.

"It's no use wasting time in this country," said Norwell one morning. "There are men who understand the business better than we do. For my part, I wouldn't tramp these hills ten years as some have done, eating bacon, and sleeping in the dirt, for all the gold and silver in the State. Those who want riches at that price are welcome to them for me. A man without capital stands little show except through a great streak of luck. If he gets a good thing he can't work it, and some capitalist freezes him out. I've been a rich man myself, and then I never thought of such things, but when I see how such men as Ophir and Tooke can employ their millions to ruin honest men regardless of law or right, it makes my blood boil. It is an outrage and a disgrace to our country."

"But what can one man do to prevent it?"

"That is just the trouble. The people as yet don't seem to care a straw about it. I'll try to stand it if they can. I'll tell you what I mean to do. I shall by some means make another fortune."

"Do you consider money everything, Tom?"

"As money, I don't. No man can use a million profitably on himself and family. But the present generation has chosen money as their god. They hold the possession of wealth above purity of character, refinement, and intellectual attainments. About the only question asked before a stranger is admitted into society in most places is, 'What is he worth?' The size of his pile measures his importance."

"This condition of society will improve with better opportunities of culture."

"No doubt a future generation will consider our standard of desirable attainment a false one. But, Arthur, I do not expect to associate with future generations. ' My lot is cast

with this one. I shall do as they do, and be on top of the heap or nowhere."

Suddenly they thought of the big lead they had staked across the opposite mountain. In the excitement attendant on the Bismarck trial they had completely forgotten this claim. They decided at once to go and see it. After a tramp of three miles they came to the place. The immense vein was distinctly visible far up the mountain side like a great rib of stone. They had learned much about ores since setting that stake several weeks before. Doffmeyer carefully examined the black heavy quartz. After a brief scrutiny of the rock they unanimously decided that it contained nothing but iron. With intense disgust they trudged back to camp in silence.

Norwell now notified Doffmeyer that their partnership would cease at once, greatly to the consternation of the Expert, who found Colorado life very easy, board and lodging found. After dinner they went to the postoffice. There Norwell found a letter, which gave him a great and most welcome surprise.

"Arthur, I have good news. A relative from whom I never expected a cent has left Alice and me each twenty-five thousand dollars."

"That's better than an iron mine in the mountains," said Wilson, laughing.

"I should say so. I'll soon be on my legs again. I think I shall go East at once."

"I've something of interest, too, Tom."

"What is it?"

"A letter from May Bryce."

"What, another! Now, don't deny it any longer, Arthur."

"I still deny. She is going to New York, too."

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed Tom in surprise.

"Yes, and she wants a letter of introduction to your sister."

"That's a good idea, Arthur, and you must write it at once. Drop a line to Alice, too, asking her to show May around." Wilson thought the latter suggestion an agreeable one also, but his more cautious nature seldom betrayed his feelings. Tom proposed going over to the Ruby House at once, so that Wilson could write the letters in time for that day's mail. Wilson sat down in the bar-room of the hotel

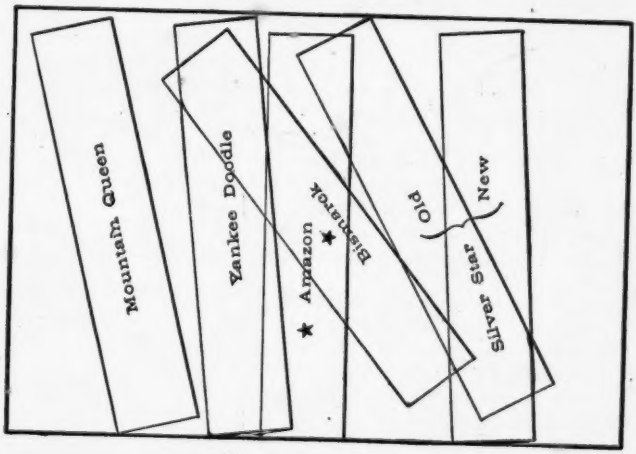
at the long pine table and wrote, while Tom chatted with the miners loafing there. Still Wilson wrote, till Tom grew impatient. One of the letters seemed of pretty good length. Tom remarked that it must be rather extended for a letter of introduction, but Wilson, laughing in reply, merely assented without any comment at all.

Tom decided to leave camp on the second day following. As Doffmeyer was to leave the cabin, Wilson must find a partner. He went to George Mack, and the latter, who had been his most intimate acquaintance in camp, agreed to move into the cabin in Norwell's place. Together they would prospect till snow fell.

The time for departure came. Norwell had all his effects rolled up in a blanket, which was securely bound with rope. The swinging, dusty old stage-coach drove up to the Ruby House. That vehicle looked in shape not unlike the rounded hull of a quaint old ship of the Middle Ages. It seemed to be hung on springs all over, and rounding a dangerous curve it often lurched toward the precipice in a way that made the tenderfoot cling to the other side in terror. A few friends and others were standing around to see Tom off. There was some handshaking, and a few hearty, picturesque expressions such as, "Tired of rustlin', eh?" Then Tom Norwell took his seat in the stage beside a "capitalist," the driver came out of the bar wiping his lips, mounted the box beside the mail sack, put on a pair of buckskin gloves, gathered up his reins carefully, cracked his whip, and away they went rattling down the road toward Dolorosa.

For a few days things looked very lonely around the cabin by the lake. But Wilson and Mack were too busy to get very lonesome. They spent some days carefully looking over the hill on which the Bismarck was situated. As the survey of that claim was still supposed not to cover the lead, they determined on making a search for the true lead outside of the Bismarck ground on the supposition that the latter was only a rich spur. They carefully noted the new survey of the Silver Star, which was nearly due north and south. Other claims on the hill were found to be nearly the same, while the Bismarck ran some thirty-five degrees west of north. If they could only enter the Yankee Doodle, and locate the true direction of its vein, the chain of evidence concerning the general direction of the veins on that hill would be complete. But the Yankee Doodle was partly owned,

and entirely controlled, by the Long gang, who would take pleasure in shooting either Mack or Wilson at sight if they were caught around the shaft. To broach such a subject to the Stengels, who still owned half the Yankee Doodle, would only excite suspicion, and furnish a pointer to the other party. The accompanying diagram will explain the situation of these mining claims, while it illustrates the curious features of mining law that several claims may overlap one another.



MAP OF THE MINES.

Wilson and Mack were not over-sensitive as to the means they should employ against the notorious Long gang. They determined to inspect the Yankee Doodle at all hazards. The day shift quit work on that claim at six o'clock, and the night shift began at seven. This would give plenty of time for a man lowered into the shaft to examine the vein. They determined to run the risk of this dangerous attempt. As evening came on they walked leisurely down the gulch, around the hill out of sight, and approached the Yankee Doodle from the opposite side. A dense growth of young spruce trees sheltered them from view, while at the short distance of about ten rods they could plainly hear the voices of the men as the day shift quit work. As the men passed up the hill

toward their cabin, which was over a rise out of sight, Wilson and Mack stole from tree to tree, till at last they were positive everybody had left the shaft.

To lower Wilson was but the work of a moment. He lighted a candle, and, by means of his compass attempted to determine the course of the vein. But this was a much harder task than he had anticipated. The layers of irregular wall rock were hard to determine by the dim light of a candle. The pay streak seemed to dip and twist from a straight course. Ten minutes elapsed. They seemed an hour to Mack, who grew impatient, and called softly down to Wilson to hurry. The latter was even using the pick in the bottom of the shaft to trace the course of the vein. Twenty minutes gone.

"Wilson, you must hurry."

"Plenty of time. They'll be gone just an hour. I think I've got it. Due north and south."

"Then for Heaven's sake take the rope till I haul you out. No telling what may happen."

"We're doing this once for all, and I want no mistakes. Just as I thought, north and south, like the Silver Star."

"Hurry up."

"I'll get a few pieces of ore while I'm at it."

"Hark! I hear something," said Mack in a whisper. A dry stick broke in the woods as if tramped by a heavy foot. Then the light of a lantern shone on the trail.

"Wilson, somebody's coming along the trail with a lantern; come quick."

"You haven't time to wind me out. It's the boys below going to town. Dodge into the brush." Mack disappeared instantly in the bushes, and Wilson blew out his candle. Slowly the light advanced along the trail, darting round streams of pale yellow through openings in the shrubbery. The crunching of the heavy nailed boots came nearer and nearer. There was only one man, and that man was Dick Long. Mack was now thoroughly frightened, for instead of passing on to the cabin, Long set his lantern on the platform by the windlass and sat down to rest. Mack anxiously watched him from his place of concealment. If he discovered Wilson in the shaft there was no telling what might happen. Long appeared in no hurry to go. He sat on the edge of the platform and broke up some ore to look at. A miner is constantly under an impulse to break ore as strong as that which impels a boy to look at a new jackknife every few minutes.

It was nearly time for the night shift to return. Long evidently intended to wait till they came. In desperation Mack rose from his place of concealment. Something must be done at once. His plan was formed in an instant. He stepped out and listened. The shaft was as quiet as a grave while Long still sat hammering quartz. Mack left the spruce thicket in an opposite direction, rapidly making a detour over the swell in the hillside, struck the trail some fifteen rods above, and then beginning to whistle, tramped carelessly down toward the Yankee Doodle.

"Who's there?" called out Long, peering into the darkness of the somber woods.

"George Mack." Then approaching he said, "Been to town and thought I'd try the trail through the park comin' back. I don't believe though it's a bit better than the old trail and a little further for me."

"Tain't as good as the old trail. It's desprit sloppy in the park on account of them springs. The old trail is tolerable good since the snow's gone." Mack walked boldly up to the shaft and remarked, "Got a little water in your shaft, I see." Then he dropped a bit of rock down as if to test the depth of the little puddle that glimmered in the starlight, and gave a significant cough.

"Not enough to hurt anything," said Long, who was unexpectedly civil as a man can afford to be who has had everything his own way.

"Long, did you ever see the like of the wild currants this year?" It was well for Mack that the darkness concealed the anxiety depicted on his face, as he made this attempt to turn the conversation in a pomological direction.

"They are tolerably plenty."

"They make a nice sauce."

"No? I reckoned they'd have a wild taste."

"Stew them in brown sugar and they're just the thing for biliousness."

"I'll try 'em. I'm sick an' tired 'o bacon an' canned truck."

"Come down the trail here and I'll show you a nice patch." Long hesitated.

"It's only a step, just beyond that big tree yonder." Long picked up the lantern and led the way toward the spot indicated. There on a mound caused by the upturning of a big tree, grew a cluster of currant bushes, from the drooping

boughs of which hung the large black fruit in tempting masses. The warm soil thus accidentally raised and exposed to the sun had made the berries unusually large and fine.

"Well, them's the nicest things I've seen in this blasted country," said Long. "But then I 'spose you ought to have 'em, seein' as you found 'em." Mack had never felt so generous. He had intended to pick the berries himself next Sunday. But he replied hastily:

"No, you take them Long. You haven't had any; there are more over by our cabin." Then he explained how much sugar they would need, how long they must be cooked, that no water need be put in, that they must be stirred constantly, and so on, till he could think of nothing at all further to say on the subject of wild-currant sauce. Then he seized a branch and exposing it to the light of the lantern, exclaimed:

"Aren't they mighty nice, though?"

"I reckon they're not to be sneezed at."

"They are better than any medicine for the liver."

"Guess I'll go for 'em Sunday." Then Long remarked that the boys were coming down to go on the night shift, and he must go up and show them where another blast was needed on the side. Mack walked down the trail into the darkness with throbbing, anxious heart. Pretty soon he heard footsteps. He waited and Wilson joined him.

"That was a close call, wasn't it?"

"I told you you had better hurry. Where would you be if it had not been for that pole ladder?"

"In the hole I guess."

"Didn't I fool Long nicely though?"

"I'll never take such another risk. When I thought of what happened in the Bismarck that night, my knees trembled so I could hardly stand. I wouldn't go into that hole again for a million dollars. But we've got a pointer, and no mistake."

Next morning, under the influence of that pointer, Wilson and Mack began cutting a ditch across the apex of the narrow triangle formed by the junction of the Bismarck and the Yankee Doodle side lines. The surface here was "wash," that is the debris from the cliff above had been accumulating there for ages, and no rock formation was exposed. They cut a long narrow trench across the hillside parallel with the mountain, two feet wide and thirty feet long. They dug this as deep as they could conveniently work in it. Still no solid

rock appeared. Miners passed and laughed at them. Many jokes were cracked at the expense of this "tunnel above ground." Then they extended the length at the ends till the ditch was sixty feet long. Still no rock appeared.

The Long party had many questions to ask about what the two men expected to cut there, but they received no satisfactory replies. Wilson and Mack now widened the ditch and increased the depth along its whole length to six feet. Still no rock appeared. The soil was full of hard boulders which were packed in the tough clay as if they had grown there. It was very toilsome labor, and the buoyant hope with which they began gradually gave place to that steady resolution which works only through a sense of duty, or to reach a prescribed limit set at the beginning. They had been at work a week and had nothing to show for their pains, but a big ugly ditch which everybody laughed at. The amount of money which has been absolutely thrown away in the United States in similar prospecting would, if accurately summed up, amount to many millions. They considered whether it were not best to stop work. Then the conclusion was reached that prospecting anywhere else was equally uncertain. As well give this a thorough trial.

They went to work again, and in ten days had dug the ditch so deep that they could no longer throw the dirt out. They increased its length to eighty feet. Then, in despair, they decided to quit. After resting for a while, Wilson concluded he would go a little deeper in the center about where the vein ought to be, according to their figuring. He dug vigorously into the tough clay, until his pick finally struck a very hard rock; but that signified nothing, they had struck many large boulders that had excited a momentary hope. He dug further, but could not reach the edge of it. It was now too late to throw away the loose dirt that night; with a faint hope they went home, very tired, and cooked their supper by firelight. Then they sat around a blazing camp fire of dry spruce, in the chill night air, and discussed plans for the future. If this prospect failed they must quit; they were nearly out of both money and provisions, while winter was rapidly approaching. October would drive out from the mountains all who did not have the necessary buildings and supplies to endure a snow blockade.

Next morning early they resumed work. The rock proved to be quartz, but that signified little, for there were

enormous masses of detached quartz all over the mountain. But the rock steadily widened. It began to look like a lead. By ten o'clock they established the fact that it was an immense vein, ten feet wide, with a pay streak of beautiful quartz four feet thick. They could scarcely believe their good fortune, though they had, at first, almost expected it. With fingers that trembled with eagerness, Wilson whittled a smooth space on a stake, and the "Amazon" lode was located, running due north and south, the usual fifteen hundred feet in length and three hundred in width. The names of Texas Jack, Shorty, and two other influential miners were placed on the stake for a twentieth each. The ground had been vacant, the title was unquestioned, and this large number of owners was a warning that no trifling with the claim would be allowed.

The name Amazon proved to be very appropriate, for, as work progressed, it was found that the lode exceeded in body and richness even the great Ruby Queen. There was the usual sensation in camp, and the usual flocking of miners to see the rich strike. Pay ore was found almost from the very first. Within one month a dozen men were at work on the mine, while a burro train crept up and down the trail packing the ore in sacks to the smelter. Wilson and Mack had been successful beyond their most extravagant hopes. They were worth a hundred thousand each, with their property appreciating in value every day. They were men of importance. They were consulted, and asked to lead in matters of public interest. Their names frequently appeared in the local paper, "The Elk Mountain Boomer," and uniformly had Esquire appended thereto. Everything that the camp had in the way of honors was theirs merely for the asking. Such is the power of the almighty dollar.

Wilson had written full particulars to Norwell as soon as the discovery was assured beyond a doubt. He also indited a careful letter to Alice Norwell, who had replied to his concerning May Bryce. This new strike had opened up new probabilities. In a year or two he could sell out, and retire on an ample fortune. There was only one regret, and that was, that Tom Norwell had not staid long enough to profit by this wonderful stroke of fortune.

Garmand had really come to the country looking for good chances to invest in mining property. Among civilized men it would not be possible to find two beings farther apart, from

every conceivable standpoint, than the Cockney and the Rustler. The British aristocracy have, by a thousand years of culture, and the persistent assumption to their caste of everything that is easy, honorable and lucrative, come to believe that the human race is divided naturally into two very distinct classes, themselves and the balance of mankind. At times, for political or other caste reasons, they admit an equality between themselves and the other nobility of Europe. But between the aristocracy and the people who are obliged to work for their living, there never was, and never can be anything in common, save the ever present fact, that the latter must contribute a portion of their scanty earnings to support the former. This forced contribution has become so much a part of the system, and is often levied under such specious guises, that, perhaps, it is never suspected by thousands of honorable, high-minded men who profit by it. No doubt, many who have considered the subject, reasoning from the standpoint of a system sanctioned by centuries of usage, think it right. Self-interest perpetuates great abuses. Although it is claimed that there is not in the world a similar number of people constituting one social whole superior in culture, refinement, and hospitality to the aristocracy of Great Britain, yet this self-constituted caste is in continual perpetration of a wrong. Perhaps an unconscious wrong but yet a bitter, inexorable wrong none the less, a wrong which allows the British laborer no part in British soil. No one denies that to remedy this wrong would cause great hardship to thousands; it would do justice to millions. The Inca of Peru was not only a man, but, at the same time, God himself. To the American it is utterly incomprehensible how such false and debasing ideas of government could ever have originated. But the nobility of Europe understands fully the advantage of these wicked notions of the constitution of society, and so, exacts privileges contrary to nature, and such as God never intended any man to possess to the exclusion of his fellow.

Garmand, as the representative, in a measure, for want of a better, of everything anti-plebeian, was the very antipodes of the social fabric around him. He looked at the swarthy, shaggy miners very much as he would look at the animals in a cage, except that he never poked them with his cane. Really, they were deuced interesting creachaws, and proper subjects of study, you know. They were so very picturesque, though he thought soap might improve them. They were

very much more unique than the peasantry of New York or Chicago. He sometimes entertained a vague suspicion that it might be possible that these queer beings scarcely recognized the fact that he belonged to a superior class. But he wisely kept such suspicions to himself. Then it seemed strange never to give them shillings when they kindly showed him around the mines, and explained the various kinds of ore. He had tried this once on a miner, but a sudden ejaculation of a very lurid nature, together with a dangerous look, and some uncomplimentary remarks about beggars, had caused him to abandon his design with great precipitation and no little alarm.

On the other hand, the Rustler looked on the Cockney as a curiosity, which a kind Providence had sent to this grim country of toil and disappointment, as a perennial source of amusement. Garmand had learned one important lesson early, namely, that bullying manners to supposed inferiors do not take well in America. Hence, he cultivated a cordiality more in consonance with the demands of his surroundings. He betrayed an almost childish ignorance, not only of mining, but of everything pertaining to Western life. In a moment of inspiration, some miner, who evidently had old Rough and Ready in mind, dubbed the Englishman "Fresh and Ready." By way of apology, a good-natured friend told Garmand that every one in that country must have a nickname, and, as he never appeared to tire of tramping around the mountains, they called him "Fresh and Ready." He laughed heartily over the idea, and thought it a good one.

Soon after the location of the Amazon, Garmand wanted to buy out Wilson and Mack. They offered to take fifty thousand dollars for the entire claim. He thought it too much, and refused to buy. In two weeks he could have doubled his money. One day Shorty asked him to go up the long ridge, west of town to see a claim. They took the day for it, resting from time to time as Garmand grew short of breath. These breathing-spells gave him opportunities to draw out some of the great fund of information which Shorty possessed, concerning the country, and which he was always willing to part with freely to strangers.

"Mr. Shorty, why do they call that bird a camp-robber?" asked Garmand, as one of these birds lazily flew to a tree near them. Shorty was not very well up in ornithology, but he was never known to allow any one to hunger long for information.

"Waal," said Shorty, squatting on a log and cutting off a fresh chew of tobacco, "you see there is a story connected with it. I'll bet my livers it's as *ro*mantic as lots o' them things they put in books. You see," said Shorty, reaching out for a piece of quartz that lay on the log left by some prospector—"Now jest look at that truck. I reckon I kin tell the name o' every claim within fifty miles as soon as I clap eyes onto their rock." Then, with a critical aspect he continued—"That's outen the Silver Knight over the range by O-Be-Joyful, an' this"—picking up another piece—"is outen the Storm King way over by Tenderfoot Gulch."

"That's wonderful. I don't see how you can do it."

"After twenty years' rustlin' ye kin bet yer lights a man knows somethin' about rock." The truth of this proposition appeared so probable that Garmand did not feel disposed to risk any portion of his anatomy disputing it. He by way of reminder, remarked:

"Mr. Shorty, you didn't finish the story about the camp-robber."

"Damfidid. My memory doesn't seem to have the grip it used to, 'cept fur rocks. I reckon it'll never let up on rocks. Waal, when this country was fust settled at Denver an' Pike's Peak there was some bad men come into it"

"Aw, really! regular sinners, I suppose?"

"Sinners!" said Shorty, with a tone of supreme contempt, "who cares fur sinners? Holy Moses! Why a rustler 'ud eat a nordinary sinner fur breakfast any day. But these warn't no sinners by a jugful. They was a lot of cussed skunks. They wouldn't stand right up in a saloon, which I reckon is the proper place fur a fuss, because there's somebody by to see fair play, and draw on their man like a Christian—no, they wasn't that sort o' chaps. They'd sneak around a feller's tent in the night an' shoot him while he was asleep an' light out with his bag o' dust an' mebbe his blankets. Waal, that sort o' thing don't go down with rustlers. It sticks in their craw. Over at Californy Gulch we ketched three of them goin' through a feller's cabin while he was workin' on his claim. One was a durn Mexican greaser an' tother two white men. One said he was a 49-er, but we wouldn't stand no sech insult as that. We told him he better say his prars instead o' lyin. So we jest swung 'em up, and saved the ropes, as they was awful scarce and high in that camp an' come mighty handy. We laid 'em side and

side in a gulch whar they'd make no disturbance, an' shoveled some gravel over 'em, though I reckon that was a waste of time for sich ornery cusses. We seed some birds hangin' round there that we hadn't noticed before, so we named 'em camp-robbers for fun. Now, it's powerful queer, but I hope to be held up right here, by the ghost of Moses, if them birds didn't come back next day and decorate them graves."

"No? Really?"

"Fact. They put flowers on the head an' they actooally spread ole gunny sacks an' ole socks over the toes that was stickin' outen that gravel."

"'Pon my soul that was very strange."

"It's wuss than strange. It was a meracle."

An interval of climbing followed this historical narration. At the next rest Shorty remarked:

"Mr. Garmand, this claim we're goin' to see is a mighty good 'un, but it isn't a patchin' to the one I have in the San Joo-an. That has six feet of pay streak that'll run two thousand to the ton, half gold. I reckon the Bank of England couldn't buy that'n." Garmand looked him square in the face and then said:

"Now, really, Mr. Shorty, I cawn't accept that statement. It is asking too much—aw now—it is, you know. Do you know what the Bank of England is? It covers ground enough for a farm. It has tons of gold and silver and wagon loads of notes and stuff. It has clerks enough to run a mining camp. Humph! it has money enough to buy out the whole of this blawsted country, you know, and not miss it." Shorty quailed. His ideas of a bank were acquired chiefly from his observation of the bank at Dolorosa, which occupied the front end of a store, while its limits in the rear were marked by a huge stack of bacon that separated the finances from the groceries. The idea of a bank that covered a farm, for a moment stampeded all other ideas in his round bullet head and left him dizzy. He knew it must be an enormous lie but he could not successfully dispute it. In the mountains Shorty was invincible. In London he was a helpless babe. He had made a great mistake in ever daring to meet the enemy on foreign soil.

"Waal, that is"—here he used a word for which the new version sometimes substitutes Hades. "Done up slick as a whistle, and by old Fresh and Ready," he muttered to himself then relapsed into silence.

Garmand enjoyed his triumph. He had on several occasions in America had a painful suspicion that the Yankee was playing him. But this was a new and strange country; he was prepared to hear strange things, and besides could not afford to doubt without adequate information to the contrary. It takes a wise man to doubt, and the Englishman was not prepared to engage in any process so difficult as to require him to fall back on his mental reserves. Still he had doubted Shorty's story about the artistic lynching of six men at the Flap Jack mine, which in fact was true excepting a few embellishments relating to unimportant details.

In silence they continued the journey to the claim, which was carefully examined, Shorty expatiating continually on the richness of the "truck," its body, etc. But the vein did not look so wide nor the ore so rich as Garmand had expected it. Though a valuable property it did not seem to be worth over one-tenth of the fifty thousand asked for it. Disgusted by similar repeated experiences Garmand wisely determined to return to New York without buying at all.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH SUNDRY OLD ACQUAINTANCES ARE RENEWED.

The apartments of the Hacketts in Cardington street looked exactly the same as they had done for years. The superintending hand of Aunt Rhoda was everywhere visible. The scrupulous polish of the little stove hearth, which had a half-oiled appearance from occasional rubbing with a cloth steeped in the dish-water, betrayed that rigid economy was the first consideration, beauty the second. The greasy water prevented the metal's rusting. If the polish did not have the metallic luster given by the article manufactured for that purpose it certainly had a domestic appearance, when well dried and rubbed, that looked far better. The sun poured into the windows, whose muslin blinds were partially lowered. In the window, drinking in deep draughts of this golden life stream, stood a handsome geranium. It had been watered and freshened with new earth brought from Long Island by a friend of Mary's, and so carefully dusted and burnished that

it looked like a spick and span new geranium from nature's show-window instead of a sober old one which had done duty in contributing for five years its mite to the very inadequate sum total of floral beauty in this wilderness of blazing bricks and choking, grimy atmosphere. The canary in the cage was engaged in a luxurious bath as a preliminary to a very elaborate toilet that befitted a canary of the great metropolis. Canaries know no distinctions of caste, and the gay little prisoner of Cardington street wore the same chaste, becoming dress of his fellows on Fifth avenue. But despite his pretty hoppings and chirpings and his melodious song, the canary continually reminds me of the man who talks eloquently of nothing to avoid a disagreeable subject. He is only a poor miserable little prisoner in spite of his gayety, and one of the long line of unfortunate, appealing prisoners, human and animal, who have looked wistfully through the cruel bars since evil first entered the world.

The sun streamed over the faded carpet and lost itself in the threadbare meshes. A spot where a hole had been burned was patched with a new piece, the bright figure of which shone out like a peony in a background of brown forest leaves. The chairs stood around the room each in its accustomed place. Space was too scarce to allow the chairs to run at large over the room, as they usually do in illy-regulated families where even the furniture acquires disorderly habits. An atmosphere of quiet pervaded the place. Aunt Rhoda sat sewing. Mary was at work at the bindery. An old wooden clock ticked away monotonously as if, in its younger days, it had ambitiously undertaken to tick out the remainder of time, but had long since been impressed with the hopelessness of one clock's ever accomplishing the feat. Like thousands of human beings it ticked now chiefly through force of habit, resigned to quit at any time. This clock was an heirloom and a curiosity. On its front below the dial was a remarkable specimen of architecture in the shape of a white house with red windows, yellow chimneys and a blue door yard. Two cerulean trees that looked exactly like those bristle swabs used for cleaning lamp chimneys, flanked the entrance to the mansion. Directly in front of the pendulum was a little oval window. Whether the clockmaker intended this as a means by which the pendulum could watch the housewife, or as a medium through which the housewife could observe any neglect of duty on the part of the pendulum, is a question

which it is not easy after the lapse of so many years to determine. Below was another panel in which was represented a youth in a coat the color of the door-yard and wearing a very stiff cravat, who was apparently making love to a very slender young lady in a cheese-colored dress with an absurdly long-pointed corsage. It is a well-attested fact that love is blind and there is strong reason for believing that it usually lacks one or more of the remaining senses. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how a young lady could listen to the voice of love while encased in a dress that reduced the upper portion of her body to the exact shape of a funnel. These persons had a faded, tired-out expression. In spite of his gay attire the young man reminded one of an octogenarian, and the young lady in the cheese-colored dress recalled to my mind a horrible little piece I used to read at school, entitled, if I remember aright, "A corpse dressed for a ball." The look of depression to be observed in the figures had come to stay, as it unfortunately often does in real life, for Aunt Rhoda, though she brightened up everything else, realized the imminent risk of attempting to restore works of art.

Aside from its historic and artistic interest, this clock had an economic one. It illustrated the thrift of a Connecticut Yankee. It had cost Mary Hackett's grandfather sixty dollars sixty years before, one-third cash, balance in notes at six per cent. To make it had cost the enterprising money getter who dealt in time, about five dollars. Aunt Rhoda laid aside her work with a sigh:

"Dear me, it's dreadful lonesome since he's gone. It was good of that Miss Ingledee to call, such a fine lady as she is. But all their good turns wont bring Johnnie back." There was a knock at the door. Aunt Rhoda opened it. and Mrs. Malley appeared:

"Good-mornin', Miss Hackett. How are ye this mornin'?"

"I'm well as usual; take a chair."

"An' are ye gittin' reconciled? The Lord knows what's best for us."

"Oh, I can't bear to think of it, Mrs. Malley."

"Seems to me if I lost Pipe or Quill that way, I couldn't stand it."

"If I could only 'a seen him buried I shouldn't 'a cared."

"Miss Hackett, if my boys was took off that way, and specially Pipe, I know I'd go wild. I couldn't keep up

under it. It was bad enough when Malley went with a fever. But then I saw him go, an' knowed just where he went to." The exact bearing of Mrs. Malley's allusions was sometimes not very discernible. Here she did not mean to say that she knew just where her departed husband's future abode might be located, but that she had seen him properly buried.

Country people, and in fact, poor people generally, have strange ideas of what constitutes consolation in time of bereavement. Around the sick bed they whisper their worst fears, and indiscreet visitors indulge in dire predictions, and cite parallel cases with fatal terminations. After the funeral they offer the most lugubrious consolation. With them, as with better informed people who fall into a certain phase of religion, man is a worm who was destined to be continually rolled in the dry dust of sorrow. For him the most direful thing that can happen is to be expected, and is scarcely the deserts of his iniquity. The commonest consolation usually heard on these occasions of sorrow is the remark, "Well, he's better off where he's gone than he was here." After some further dismal attempts at consolation, Mrs. Malley turned the subject of conversation in the direction of her own boys.

"Say as ye like, them boys has been good to me, an' that's more than some mothers can say."

"They're go ahead boys. Now our Johnnie never could 'a done much, being a cripple."

"It's Pipe that's got the go ahead, I guess. Would you believe since he started in business he's saved nearly two hundred dollars?"

"I want to know."

"Now he's goin' to rent a store and put up a big sign, "Pipe Malley & Co."

"I want to know."

"Pipe says he'll have a wagon yet, with Pipe Malley & Co. painted on the side. That'll be a proud day for him."

"Who's the company. Isn't Quill an equal partner?"

"No, he's not been took in yet. I wanted him to be, for it didn't seem fair seein' they were twins, to keep Quill out of the firm. But Pipe said he had started the fruit stand and made all the capital, and if Quill wanted to go in he'd haf to put up the money. I'd put it up myself, only I couldn't raise a hundred dollars if I broke my back at the wash tub. So Quill will have to work for the firm as a clerk."

"If Quill had any snap he'd work for himself and git a business of his own."

"But Quill is easy like, an' faith I believe he couldn't manage the business if he had it."

A glance at Mr. Quill Malley's affairs may be of interest here. At first, loth to enter Roker's employ and play spy on his teacher's friend, Quill had soon managed to overcome his scruples toward a business which brought him in a dollar so easily every time he engaged in it. Then the business which consisted merely in dodging around corners and watching a man, was to his notion very agreeable and highly genteel. But on Tom Norwell's absence Quill's new occupation was ended as suddenly as it began. By hanging around Roker's lodgings he at last caught a sight of that individual, and with papers under his arm managed to meet the smooth-faced gentleman, whose thin lips concealed a hair-trigger snarl warranted to go off instantly. Crossing directly in front of Roker, Quill called:

"Heral, Mister? Worl, Times, Heral?" Then lowering his voice he ventured, "Say Mister, can't ye give a fellow 'nother job?" Roker gave a most forbidding scowl and accompanied it with a threatening movement of his cane. Quill shrank back.

"You little scoundrel, I'll give you a job. You're hanging round this place watching the house to give information to some gang of burglars. Yes, I'll give you a good long job. Here's a policeman at the next corner." Then he grabbed Quill by the arm.

"Please don't, Mister," said Quill meekly, afraid to resist. "I wasn't doin' nothin'."

"Don't lie to me, you little scamp. There have been several burglaries committed in this street lately."

"Please Mister, I'm innocenter than —" Here Quill's rhetoric failed him, not being well supplied with similes that did justice to excessive innocence, never having had occasion before to use them. "I seed no harm in speakin' to a old acquaintance. Lemme go this time an' I'll never show up here agin."

"Oh, you won't?"

"Honor bright, I won't."

"What do you think I'd do if you did?"

"I 'spose I'd git six months any way."

"Your judgment is very correct, I see. You know then that I shall be compelled to have you locked up, eh? You *want* to be locked up do you, poking your nose into other people's affairs?"

"No I don't. I know you'd like to do it."

"I don't want to, but I'm afraid I'll have to. Now clear out," said Roker, giving Quill a shove. The latter needed no second invitation. His little plan of going into "business" too, and surprising his brother Pipe, had signally failed.

"This is wot a feller gits," he murmured, when out of Roker's hearing, "fur accommodatin' them fly chaps. They hain't no more thanks about 'em than a oyster."

After Mr. Norwell's death, Alice Norwell feeling that she must now earn her own living, had taken a very plain little room where she could reduce her expenses to a minimum. She knew how to do nothing in particular, and numerous applications in answer to advertisements, only revealed her incapacity, and the hard fact that the best she could hope to get under the most favorable circumstances would be very little. Hickley had furnished her with legal copying, which she was able to do rapidly and well. He advised her to learn shorthand and type-writing. The latter business was then in its infancy and promised very handsome remuneration. Garmand had called on her several times before making his trip to the West. He was delighted with the cosiness of the tiny parlor which Alice was allowed to use for the reception of company.

"Really, this is quite chawming, Miss Norwell."

"I like it very much. The people are very kind to me."

"Poor people, I suppose. 'Pon my soul, they seem to get along uncommon comfortably. I wouldn't mind trying it awhile myself. I suppose after all it's chiefly the way we look at things that makes the difference."

"A palace is a poor exchange for happiness," said Alice, with a smile, which the careful observer would have construed as an expression of resignation to her misfortunes.

"That is a highly expressive way of stating the case. I venture the people who live in palaces never thought of that at all. I almost feel as if I could be poor myself. It must be chawming, just for a change."

Wyndleigh Garmand spoke of poverty much as he would speak of a boot that was rather too tight. He was apparently under the impression that it could, like that useful article of dress, be laid aside, when it pinched a trifle too hard, and forgotten. As a change, perhaps, even poverty might be agreeable for a time. He knew no more of poverty than he did of most other things outside that favored circle of British

society, in which no man works or takes a thought of the morrow.

Had Garmand only admitted it, or thought of the subject at all, he would have found that the chief interest attached to this out-of-the-way abode of respectable poverty, was not the little artifices by which poverty strove to make itself endurable, but the companionship of the refined woman he met there. He knew she was not beautiful, especially since misfortune had added a shade to the gravity of features never inclined to levity. But then he could forgive the lack of beauty in woman, which some men never can do. This one could interest him in almost any subject by her graces of intellect and conversational resources. Then, as she at heart pitied his ignorance of American ways, she indirectly corrected many little blunders of which he was guilty. This was done so delicately that he felt obliged for the information, while he flattered himself that she was unconscious of the service she was rendering.

When the legacy received by Tom and Alice had partially retrieved their fortunes, they hired better apartments in a good locality, and lived in comfort again. Their income, however, would not admit of any attempt at style. But Alice had no desire to participate much in the doings of the so-called best society. She could amuse herself more profitably with a much less expenditure of time, money and strength. Tom was still popular, and under the ægis of Chetta Ingledee's friendship, again entered the circles to which he had been accustomed. Some of their former friends were rather cool in their treatment of the Norwells. Miss Harrie Snicker in particular thought that now when they were poor they ought not to crowd themselves into select society. "If people were allowed to go where nobody wanted them, pretty soon society would be dreadfully common."

May Bryce, who was visiting an aunt that lived a short distance up the Hudson, was in the city a great deal now, and always stopped with the Norwells. She and Alice had become fast friends. Theater parties, card parties, and other means of amusement, were planned especially for May's benefit. In this respect it was hard to tell which was most attentive to their guest, the brother or the sister. Alice's interest resembled that of an elder sister toward a younger, for whom she, in a measure, takes the place of a mother. May's unsophisticated country ways had a certain charm for this

young lady, who had all the niceties of refinement and elegances of manner imparted by constant intercourse with polite society, but who never showed them off merely for effect. But May Bryce was no country school-girl with hoydenish manners. She was unpracticed but not awkward, diffident but not dull. Her mind had received careful training, and she had read considerable, and, better still, only the best books. Her father and mother, unlike most country people, were competent to advise in this particular, for they had themselves enjoyed exceptional advantages for people in their station of life. Mr. Bryce was known as a wealthy farmer, and could afford to indulge his daughter's tastes.

Within the circle of her friends, May was of a very confiding nature. She had never deceived anybody in her life, and believed everybody else incapable of deceit, except, perhaps, an occasional very bad person, such as novelists employ for villains. She had an imaginative nature that delighted to dwell in an ideal world. This feature of her character had grown to abnormal proportions for several reasons. She had never seen any great trouble. She had no brothers and sisters, hence had missed that valuable adjunct to true development, intimate association with those who cannot conceal their faults, and whose virtues may not be exaggerated by the halo of distance. May had never been a leader even in the simple society of her neighborhood. She formed none of those sweet girl acquaintanceships which are so effusive and ephemeral. Hence her opportunities to learn by observation what human nature really was, were few. Her reluctance to form intimate acquaintances was chiefly because she had constantly pictured to herself superior beings, and was consequently not satisfied with the commonplace ones she saw around her. Many arrive at this same result by constant reading of highly sentimental fiction, but in May Bryce it was a consequence of the feeling that in delicacy of perception and refinement of feeling, she was far superior to the young folks with whom she was thrown. She secretly hoped that sometime she might occupy a more exalted sphere in life. In her childlike ignorance of human nature she was painfully credulous. The most improbable fib told by some mischievous companion passed for truth, because, since she had no impulses toward deception, she thought others could have none. She learned slowly the painful truth that all men lie naturally, that some lie with a conscience, and others lie for the love of it. She was

so tender hearted that she would not willingly give pain to the most insignificant creature. But in spite of all these traits of character, which may combine in rare instances to render the life of their possessor very happy, but ordinarily bring only misery, May Bryce had others equally strong in an opposite direction. She had a vigorous intellect, whose gifts would win her recognition in any society in which she might be thrown. She had a will power which, aided by conscientiousness, would in case of any great crisis, enable her to take a decided stand and abide the consequences, whatever they might be. With all her natural diffidence of character and her erratic, exuberant imagination she was not a purposeless girl. She could conceive difficult undertakings and though they might possess a shade of the impractical, the product of her luxuriant fancy, she had the patience and perseverance to carry them out to a legitimate conclusion. Her slender figure, delicate features and fair complexion, gave her a child-like appearance which did injustice to her real womanhood. She was a noble woman, as pure as an angel, with strong convictions, and an instinctive hatred of everything that was wrong.

Possessing such a nature she must of necessity be impressed with the cordial, easy manners of Tom Norwell. To good manners he joined the attractions of more than ordinary personal beauty. He was, or at least she thought he was, which amounted to the same thing, the ideal hero of whom she had long dreamed, but had never met among the farmer boys of Illinois. She worshiped him at once and with her whole soul, without the thought ever entering her head that such devotion might not be best for her. This feeling was not conscious love, it was simply admiration of an unattainable object. But when this demi-god had smiled on her in return, and even asked for her company to the spelling school, she was supremely happy. It was bliss such as she had dreamed of, but never hoped to attain while she remained in her prairie home. She accepted his attentions for much more than they meant, and never thought of concealing the pleasure she felt in his company.

No unmarried young man with anypretensions to culture can be insensible to the charms of an intelligent, refined young woman, especially when these attractions are combined with sufficient beauty. Tom Norwell naturally was interested in May Bryce while a guest in her father's house.

He left, thinking of her occasionally as he would of any other lady friend met under similar circumstances. She, in her innocence of the world, had given him her heart at the very beginning.

When Tom returned from Colorado he found May visiting with his sister. The former acquaintance was renewed with mutual pleasure. As the weeks passed, Tom began to think over the situation. He had not seen Chetta Ingledee as often lately as he did formerly. She was just as friendly as ever, and reproached him for his neglect of old acquaintances. But he was comparatively a poor man now, while she was still the wealthiest heiress in America. He felt that they could never again be the old friends they were before his misfortunes. He would never lay himself open to the imputation of fortune hunting. Then he could not bring himself to acknowledge that he had ever really loved Chetta. There was a something of assertiveness in her character which jarred on his notions of what the ideal wife should be. Soon he began by degrees to feel that he was rather fond of May Bryce. Perhaps, without really intending it, in a particularly tender mood one evening as they promenaded a fashionable avenue he told his love and learned that it was returned. He told her frankly his financial circumstances and dwelt on the expense of living in New York. Her love was not marred by any disagreeable reflections on the subject of house rent or grocer's bills. She was happy to know that she was loved. That was sufficient for the present. He told her they must not think of marrying for several years. Meantime, he asked her to tell the engagement to no one in New York. She cared nothing whether the betrothal was a secret or made public. She was supremely happy, and that was enough.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SURPRISE FOR THE HACKETTS, WITH THINGS BOTH PLEASANT AND UNPLEASANT FOR MR. QUILL MALLEY.

After due time the necessary legal steps had been taken, and the Norwells received the legacy bequeathed to them. Alice at once invested hers in bonds, where there could be no possible chance of loss. The six per cent. interest derived from her twenty-five thousand dollars would give her an ample income for a single woman of modest wants. She urged a like investment upon Tom, for she did not approve his feverish desire to get rich. He laughed at his sister's advice, saying that secure investment was the proper thing for women, but a man, by watching opportunities, could do much better with ready cash.

On the evening of the day on which Tom's money was finally placed to his account in the bank, he came home in fine spirits. Fortune had smiled on him at last. He hoped this slight relaxation of feature on the part of that capricious dame was a forerunner of the graciousness with which she regards her favorites. During the day he had drawn from the bank ten crisp one hundred dollar greenbacks. After dinner he took his hat about seven o'clock and strolled down town, saying to Alice he was going out to call on a friend. He went directly to the East side and soon found himself in Cardington street, where the Hacketts lived. Mounting the grimy, decayed stairway, he rapped at their door, which was opened by Mary.

"Oh, Mr. Norwell—come in. We're ever so glad to see you." The smile that lighted Mary's thoughtful face and the sparkle in her eyes told plainly that her greeting was no idle compliment.

"Good-evening, Mary," said Tom, giving her hand a hearty shake. "How are you, Aunt Rhoda?"

"I'm kind o' grunty, Mr. Tom," said Aunt Rhoda, in a tone which implied that life is a very gay affair usually and that its levity must be toned down occasionally by the interjection

of lugubrious intervals as a sort of protest against excessive light-heartedness.

"Old complaint?" said Tom.

"Yes," said Aunt Rhoda, with a sigh that sounded the very depths of resigned and determined gruntiness. "I'll never get rid of it, I guess."

Now, the "old complaint" was a medley of imaginary disorders, for which the medical fraternity, with all their marvelous resources of nomenclature, had no adequate name. Aunt Rhoda, in fact, enjoyed very good health for an old person, and beyond a little rheumatism and other trifling ailments, there was nothing the matter. Her condition was aptly described as grunty. It is a disease which never kills but works itself off for the time being in that pointless grumbling which seems to give as much satisfaction to the grumbler as it does annoyance to those who are compelled to listen.

"Aunt doesn't feel very well. The damp weather affects her rheumatism. She's getting along in years, you know."

"Gittin' on in years! Sixty-five isn't gittin' on at all. Mary, your grandfather, John Hackett, was nigh onto a hundred when he died. Wouldn't 'a died then if he hadn't caught a desperate cold that took him off sudden."

Soon the conversation was turned toward the departed member of the family. The two women plied Tom with questions concerning Little Hackett's last illness, death and burial. They inquired into the most minute particulars after the strange fashion of certain people who love to dwell on the most trifling incidents connected with their dead. They asked about his sickness, his last words, his appearance before death, whether the corpse looked natural, how deep his grave was, the kind of coffin, the appearance of the burial place, the services, and in short, everything connected with the sad event. Tom answered all fully and patiently, for this was his first visit of any length since his return and he knew that this knowledge would serve to allay the grief of the sorrowing women and soften memory with the certainty that all had been fittingly done. His thoughtful kindness was the debt of man to man. In all the ages of eternity there is only one second of equality and that is the open grave. Tom's own recent bereavement made him very patient of this sad inquisition into the last scenes of death.

The man of the world met on equality with these simple-minded poor folks. They had all suffered, and all remembered.

As Tom was about to depart he drew the ten new bills from his pocket and said:

"Mary, here is the thousand dollars your brother invested with us. I succeeded in saving it, after all. Take it and loan it again." Aunt Rhoda gave an exclamation of delight:

"Oh, Mr. Tom, it's rale good of you to take so much pains for poor bodies like us. But how did you manage it? We give it up for lost long ago."

"Oh," said Tom, evasively, "I couldn't do much but just wait till everything was settled."

"Well, it's dreadful good of you. I always said the Norwells weren't the small kind to take advantage of poor folks if they could help it."

"Why, Auntie!" said Mary, hastily, "how absurdly you talk. Who ever said they would cheat anybody?" Mary followed Tom Norwell to the door and said in a low tone outside:

"Mr. Norwell, you didn't get it back." He was silent. She continued: "We can't take it this way."

"I'd rather you would. I advised Johnnie to invest and he lost."

"It wasn't your fault. He took his chances and lost. We can get along. I have mine yet, and my pay has been raised to ten dollars per week. Take it back," and she handed him the bills.

"No, Mary, I will not take it back. Keep the money. You see I fell heir to a pretty snug sum and I've plenty. Take it to Hickley and he will loan it for you."

"I'd rather not take it."

"If you don't want to have a falling out with me, Mary, you'd better keep it,"—and with a laugh Tom went quickly down stairs.

"Mary, it seems to me it took you a pretty good spell to let Mr. Tom out."

"Why, Aunty, I was only a minute."

"Land sakes! you was nearer five. Mary, I guess you be as sensible as most girls of your age. But it isn't sensible for a young girl to dally at the door with a young man, especially when he's her betters." Mary looked up with astonishment, and then quietly remarked:

"Auntie, I'm surprised."

"I'm not. I've seen too much nonsense between boys and girls in my time. My father never allowed me to swing on the gate. People in Vermont thought anything proper to be said at all could be said in the settin' room afore the old folks. Mary, you take care. Tom Norwell's a handsome, spry young chap with takin' ways, but I guess he don't care nothin' particler about you." Mary's cheeks were scarlet, which fortunately Aunt Rhoda could not see, for the young lady just then was searching industriously for a thimble in the little workbox on the shelf. She said quietly:

"Aunty, I never thought he did."

On his way home, as Tom was emerging from a cross street near the Bowery, he caught sight of a sign over the way which read, "Pipe Malley & Co., Dealers in Choice Fruits." In his first moments of surprise, Tom hardly knew what to make of this unexpected apparition. Then he concluded that Chetta Ingledee must have set up her pupils in business. He crossed and took a look at their store. This emporium of commerce was not of large dimensions. It was situated in a shabby old brick building which had no great depth. The original store had been divided into two, leaving each perhaps ten feet front by thirty feet deep, the rear facing another street, being set off into a store running the other way. One of these narrow rooms was occupied by Pipe Malley & Co., the other by a shoemaker. Pipe came forward with his best manner to welcome the customer. He had noticed the bland smile and polite greeting of other shopkeepers, and was learning them himself, though for a day or two he felt a little disappointed at the results. His manner did not seem to impress customers greatly as yet.

"Wot'll you have this evenin', sir?" Pipe began.

"I just dropped in to see if you were a gentleman I used to know."

"Lemme see. Why, if you hain't Mr. Norwell. You know some friends of mine, I guess. Glad ter see you."

Mr. Pipe Malley was clad in a coarse, ready-made suit of gray stuff. He wore whole shoes which had been carefully polished—by Quill—and a collar which had not been polished for several days. Altogether, he looked a very gentleman of fashion compared with what he had once been. Quill was behind the counter gaping at Tom, and mentally revolving

what a rare opportunity that was of earning a dollar if "that duffer hadn't gone and played him so mean." That young gentleman was not so pretentiously arrayed as his twin brother. In this particular he could scarcely have asserted with any degree of confidence that "he was twins too." In fact, he wore a suit which his more fastidious counterpart had rejected as unfit to deck the person of the proprietor of a store. In addition to exceedingly rough usage, Quill's clothing had the disadvantage of being too small, Pipe himself, the year before, having found them very inconvenient in this respect. The pantaloons were considerably too short, and in conformity to the law of antagonism between trousers and hose, Quill's socks persisted in settling down in wrinkles till they reposed comfortably on his shoe tops, leaving exposed a zone of very dirty ankle. Quill's face matched his ankles, and his hands exceeded both in dirtiness, for he was constantly foraging among decayed oranges and moldy figs. Like some people of much more pretentious station, Quill was perhaps devouring articles liable to spoil in order to save them. A customer entered and asked for some figs. Though not a particularly fastidious-looking man himself, when he saw Quill burrowing among them with his dirty hands, he objected:

"Young man, I think your hands are not very clean for the fruit business."

Pipe at once came forward.

"Quill, hain't I give orders often enough that things must be kep' clean. There's no use tellin' you anything. Go and wash them hands. No soap, ain't they? Go out an' git a cake." Then he waited on the customer himself, and gave him his change with a polite bow. Pipe's bow still twisted abnormally to the right, in spite of his efforts to make it conform to the rectilinear popular standard. Like a tree that has been once bent, and still persists in lopping over under pressure of wind and rain, Pipe's bow, which, on ordinary occasions was good enough, and improving with luxurious habits and associations, flew off on a tangent when he labored under some excitement. As Norwell was leaving, Pipe said:

"Can't you come agin, Mr. Norwell? If ye hain't no reglar place o' dealin', try our establishment. Pipe Malley & Co. guarantees straight goods an' prompt attention."

Extending such encouragement to the young merchant as

courtesy required, Tom bade Pipe good-evening. Just then Quill returned from an adjoining grocery with a bar of soap. Pipe was in a bad humor with Quill's slovenly habits, which exhibited no improvement.

"Say, young feller," he began, "wot do you mean by insultin' of customers that way? If you don't look out you'll be huntin' another situation some fine day, you will."

"I wasn't doin' nothin'. Kin I help it if fellers comes inter the store in a bad humor and begins to growl?"

"Oh, you wasn't doin' nothin', eh? No, nothin' but eatin' figs an' daubin' 'em on yer face. Yer eatin' yer head off every day. It's got to be stopped."

"Well, 'spose a customer kicks. Kin I help it? Tain't fair. If I *ain't* a partner, ain't I twins too?"

"Mind yer that customer wasn't kickin' at the goods. He was kickin' at the clerk. A customer's got a right to kick at the clerk. An' look at them socks! Down again! Quill, pull up them socks." The order was obeyed in silence. "Now come back here an' wash that dirty mug o' yourn. I'll boss the job, I guess, myself. Durn it all, Quill, ye don't know the fust principles o' washin' yer face. Fill that basin with water." The order was obeyed with reluctance. "Now peel off the kiver of that cake o' soap." This operation was performed very slowly. Quill now fully realized that this was a crisis in his toilet experiences, the like of which had never occurred before. He glanced at Pipe's face in mute appeal, but that business-like individual was inflexible. "Git ready. Now wen I says *soap*, you rub some all over yer hands an' face. If they hain't enough on, I'll keep sayin' soap till there is enough. Wen I say *lather*, you rub till you make shavin' lather all over yer hands an' face, and perticklers them ears, for they need it awful. Ready! Soap!" Reluctantly the cleansing compound was applied very sparingly. "Soap!" again fell relentlessly on Quill's ears. Again soap it was, but Quill had never seemed more economically inclined. He was about to lay down the bar, preparatory to the second step in the operation. The odious word "*soap*" was heard a third time, accompanied by the observation:

"It'll take a heap of it to git through that crust."

"It's gittin' in my eyes."

"'Twon't hurt 'em. Shut 'em. They'll feel lots better wen you git it out."

This time the slippery compound slid into unexplored

spots which it had never before visited. Pipe was satisfied, and called "*lather.*" Quill began to rub his face in a careless, streaky sort of way. "Don't fool, rub hard, an' make it froth." Quill rubbed and winced, and catching his breath got some soapsuds in his mouth that nearly strangled him, but the only reply to all his distress was, "Chip in 's if ye meant business. Rub hard an' none o' your monkeyin'." After more friction and a great deal of coughing and making of faces on the part of Quill, Pipe called, "Rench it off now." Quill was only too glad to "rench" it off, and the rinsing process revealed a face which shone under the combined effects of soap and friction like a boiled lobster.

"Now wipe her off, and yer all O K. Humph! yer mother wouldn't know ye. Ye wouldn't know yerself fur that matter, if ye met yerself in a strange alley. This yer is only a kind of first base. If I ever ketch you round here scarin' away customers agin with yer dirty face, we'll make a home run on the soap an' water business. Now git in the stuff from the sidewalk," saying which, Mr. Pipe Malley proceeded to reckon up the day's receipts.

Before going home, the twins usually strolled some distance along the Bowery diverting themselves, as a means of relaxation from the cares of business, with the varied sights to be witnessed there at night. As Broadway represents the respectable and commercial elements of the metropolis, so the Bowery represents the lower and more numerous elements of the social organization. Broadway surges with a living tide all day. At night the Bowery, brilliantly lighted, is thronged with people. The retail shops are open, concert saloons, cheap places of amusement, restaurants, oyster houses, fruit stands, and sidewalk merchants all have their patrons. Thousands of people are in the street, consisting of the inhabitants of that region, strangers seeing New York, clerks, gamblers, harlots, thieves, sailors, boot-blacks, and a miscellany hard to classify. For the student of human nature it is a rich field. Here is a man who sells nothing but oysters, raw or roasted, another who deals exclusively in boiled green corn with pepper and salt, and by his side, a merchant who vends nothing but combs. Here is a retail store with customers coming and going, by its side is a saloon ablaze with light, and the liveliest tunes of music going incessantly. Many a young man enters its doors carelessly and takes a glass of beer. Next time, perhaps, he has a taste for the beverage, on the

third visit he may consume several glasses along with hilarious friends, and the appetite rapidly grows. This young man may be separated only ten or twenty years from the trembling, besotted old tramp, who begs in rags for a nickel, under pretense of hunger, only to spend it in drink.

Here too, is the young man from the country, perhaps not so very young, who is bent on seeing the sights since he is away from the restrictions of home. He is lucky if he does not end by being drugged and robbed or murdered in some low dive. He gets into trouble because he goes where trouble is, instead of going to a respectable place of amusement, or quietly staying in his hotel. His experience is bought very dearly, and unfortunately cannot teach his neighbors by its example.

Horace Roker sometimes staid down town with one or two friends instead of going to his fashionable boarding house for dinner. On such occasions the party had various means of spending the evening. Sometimes they strolled along the Bowery, curiously studying the motley throng.

Since Roker had seen Tom Norwell once or twice in the same locality, he sometimes strolled there himself. On the present occasion, he had, by chance, seen Tom leave Pipe Malley & Co.'s store. He carelessly passed the place, and observing Quill inside, at once recognized him.

Wondering at this sudden rise in the world of his former acquaintance, he determined to use him again in discovering Tom's motive for visiting this region. Norwell must come here with a purpose. He most likely visited some one, and, naturally, that one must be a woman, Roker thought. Sauntering around the block, Roker soon had the satisfaction of seeing the boys close the store for the night. Taking the other side of the street, he crossed, and turning, met Quill, who was a little distance behind. Passing them he beckoned Quill to stop, as Pipe turned into the Bowery out of sight.

"I want you," Roker said sternly to Quill. Roker was thoroughly skilled in reading human nature. He had learned on their first acquaintance, that it was very easy to manage Quill through his abject cowardice, and general want of self-assertive qualities.

"I think it ain't fair; can't you let up on a feller?" Quill had a lively apprehension that Roker knew all about his transactions with the cannel coal-yard, or similar operations at market stalls.

"I'll not be very hard on you if you will do as I ask you, and never lie to me."

"Mister, I never lied to yer."

"You and your brother have a fruit store?"

"Yes sir."

"Are you one of the firm?"

"Wot?"

"Are you a partner?"

"No. Pipe says I must work onto a salary of three dollars a week till I learns the biz. Tain't fair though, fur I'm a twin same as he is."

"Who is the Company?"

"Wot Company?"

"Why your sign reads Pipe Malley & Co."

"I never seed any company. Guess they put that on to fill up the board."

"Mr. Norwell stopped at your place to-night."

"Who said he didn't?"

"What did he want?"

"Nothin' partickler."

"Next time he comes find out where he goes."

"Wot's it worth, Mr. Roker?"

"It isn't worth anything in particular, but then I'll make it a dollar."

"Say Mister, couldn't you make it two dollars. It's a good ways up to the Park, an' when a feller's in a store"—

"You little scamp," said Roker, with a scowl that frightened Quill as he observed the twitching of the man's scalp below his hard, stiff hat, "never mention two dollars to me again, or I'll." Vague penalties are always worse in anticipation than those more specific in appearance. A flogging is usually not half so bad as the thought of it. So Roker invoked the aid of uncertainty to chastise the presumption of the twin, whose imagination was free to range over the whole field of dire possibilities, "Same place; same way as before. Mind you don't forget."

"I ain't the forgittin' kind."

Roker sauntered up street musing. Knowing Chetta Ingledee's frank, generous disposition, he felt sure she would never forgive deceit in a lover. If Tom Norwell could only be detected in some disreputable love affair, especially with some one far beneath him in social standing, he felt sure that Chetta would scorn him even if it tore her heartstrings. She

would marry an icicle without a spark of human passion, rather than a warm-hearted man who had grossly outraged her notions of propriety. So reasoned Roker. His premises were sound, his conclusion logical, but love is above logic.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A DISAGREEABLE REVELATION.—THE FEASIBILITY OF A VILLA ON THE HUDSON.

Miss Ingledee counted on having Tom Norwell for an active society ally as he always had been. But somehow Tom's calls grew fewer and fewer. He did not seem to exhibit a particle of enthusiasm while she disclosed her plans to him as her confidential adviser. On one occasion when Miss Ingledee, Miss Harrie Snicker and Tom had been called in council over a proposed opera party, Tom's indifference amounted almost to rudeness, and Chetta plainly told him so.

"Mr. Norwell, I think since you have been out West among those savages you have become almost a savage yourself."

"I'm not dangerous, at any rate," replied Tom laughing.

"You are just spoiled entirely. It's too bad."

"I think it's real mean," pouted Miss Snicker. "To think of those horrid miners who never come above ground for years. I wish they'd stay down there forever. They must be dreadful common."

Tom replied that the Western miner was by no means common except in the sense of abundant. In fact, he was a most uncommon production of nature and well worthy a description by the naturalist.

After his departure Miss Snicker suggested that probably Tom Norwell held back because his sister could not afford to dress well enough to enter society. For her part she thought people who couldn't afford to go into society ought to keep out of it. Beggars shouldn't try to hold up their heads with other people. "Other people" with Miss Snicker, was synonymous with millionaires. Chetta had a more plausible guess which she kept to herself. Tom Norwell was to her a high-spirited, sensitive man who, now that he was poor, would

not aspire to the hand of an heiress, because he might be charged with the despicable motive of fortune-hunting. Chetta had so long nourished the habit of regarding Tom as a lover, that it never occurred to her to consider him in any other light, though he had never spoken directly of love. If he hesitated he must be encouraged. Then she was angry at the apparently absurd custom which renders it impossible for a woman to speak her love first. She said to herself, "Here I must sit like a painted doll in a toy shop to be admired and perhaps selected by some man. Any marked preference shown by me to a gentleman would be unwomanly. I hate such stupid customs."

In pursuance of her plan of mild encouragement Tom was invited to dinner. Mr. Ingledee was in a most affable and condescending mood. Evidently there was no objection on his part. Silas too, had consented to contribute a small portion of his very much occupied time and lend his presence to the occasion. He knew how to be a gentleman. He was greatly pleased with an account of Tom's Western experiences and in turn did his best to entertain. It was evident that Tom Norwell stood well with the Ingledees. Paterfamilias even talked almost confidentially concerning some of his great stock operations, though doubtless what he revealed was of small moment compared with what he kept back. He offered to supply Tom with "pointers" whenever he chose to deal. What greater mark of esteem could a railway king offer?

After Tom's departure Chetta and Silas sat idly talking for a few minutes before the latter started to fulfil an appointment. Chetta remarked that Tom Norwell seemed changed of late. After listening to details for some time, Silas interrupted her:

"Chet, don't you know what the trouble is?"

"No. What is it?"

"He's got another girl."

"Oh, of course every young gentleman is acquainted with a great many young ladies," said Chetta, trying to appear indifferent.

"Quite true, sister; but they are better acquainted with some than with others." Silas looked at his watch, rose, and left the room. It was nearly eleven o'clock, but this gay young man was just starting out to begin the evening.

Chetta sat alone for some time in profound thought. The

brilliant glare of the gaslight struggled through the rare lace curtains and closed blinds of the deep plate-glass windows, or lost its aggressive whiteness as it softened down amid the intricate patterns of the rich gold paper on the wall, or the many-hued tints of the frescoes on the ceiling. Indulging its strange propensities, this unnatural offspring of sunlight played strange freaks with the colors, so that green could scarcely be distinguished from blue, or yellow from orange. A costly French clock on the mantel shelf, resplendent in gold and ebony, ticked in low, musical tones that seemed like the echoing notes of a hidden fairy. Still the girl sat on a low chair with her head on her hand thinking. The flood of gaslight poured through the wide doors in the hallway. It flickered on the polished surfaces of the statuary and bronzes and the yellow marble posts that ended the balustrade, and crept up the smooth marble hand rail, dying away like the vanishing trail of a distant meteor. Still the girl sat, wrapped in thought. The sweet music of the clock striking eleven failed to arouse her. Carriages passed returning from theaters, but she did not hear them. A portrait of her mother looked from a massive gold frame. It was very like the daughter, except that the lady was older and had a thoughtful expression, as if the original had never found complete happiness in life. Now the face almost seemed to assume a quickened, apprehensive interest, as if the disembodied spirit looked out of the canvas in thoughtful solicitude for that child, who was unconscious of her presence. A shade it must have been, intangible to any human sense, if indeed the departed ever revisit us except as a dim stirring of our memory.

The watchman was heard going his rounds trying the doors to see if they were securely fastened. But Chetta Ingledee did not hear him. It apparently devolved on the flooding light to arouse her, since the carriages, the clock, and the heavy tramping of the watchman had successively failed. The streaming light seemed to redouble its brilliancy as it often does when we all at once become conscious of its presence. The rushing jets leaped in a dizzy whirl from the tiny orifices as they strove to escape fast enough. The flood of light rippled over the fair neck and got tangled and lost in the dark masses of hair. It tried again and outdid all previous efforts with no success. The gold on the picture frames, on the gasaliers, on the clock—indeed, there was gold pretty much everywhere—sparkled with dazzling magnificence un-

der the blinding profusion of light. It was all in vain. This woman had no eye for gold. For the first time in her life she wanted something gold cannot buy—love. Her beautiful dream so long indulged, was rudely dispelled by a sudden awakening. As she sat there, trying to think in an incoherent way, vainly attempting to restore its fragments to shapeliness, this heiress of millions was no more potent over circumstances than the country girl in the calico gown, who by the light of a dingy oil lamp ponders the sad fact that her lover is untrue. Both are simply women.

Carriages passed with increasing frequency, but they failed to arouse this lonely woman sitting amid Fifth Avenue splendors, oblivious to everything except the danger of losing her lover. It was now the turn of the clock to make another effort to recall its mistress to the fact that time runs forever the same, whether its course is by the bier or the bridal altar. The efforts of this silvery-toned clock were about as absurd as would be the attempt of the canary to usurp the place of chanticleer and try to wake the family by crowing. The clock braced up to its work with a great deal of business-like bustle, such as is displayed by a little man unconscious of inferiority, and hammered out the hour of twelve, prolonging and emphasizing the job as much as possible. The last stroke seemed to say, "See there now! I've done it!" The girl raised her head greatly to the surprise of the clock, which now reflected back the rays of light from the gas jets with contemptuous indifference, and took all the credit to itself, after the fashion of the aforesaid little man (small either physically or mentally) whose every action is continually saying, "There now, if you'll allow me, I did that."

"Can he be so base? No, I'll not reproach him, for he has made no vows. Can he be so blind as not to see I love him? No, Tom is not stupid. Some woman," she said, with sudden energy, "has won him by her wiles. Who is it that presumes to cut asunder two lives of love?" Then, with an impulsive vehemence, she went on, "I'll not give him up. He has always been mine. What is life without him? He shall yet be mine, in spite of her." Chetta disappeared up the broad stairway, and a servant, with noiseless tread, extinguished the lights in the parlors, and the great house sheltered another disappointment.

The Norwells lived in a snug little flat of five or six rooms, in a genteel street well up town. On this same evening a

very different scene took place in their cosy little parlor. May Bryce had come to town to spend a few weeks. Tom announced at lunch that he should not be home to dinner. The women after dinner sat chatting pleasantly. They were already well acquainted, and treated each other almost like sisters. This secretly pleased Tom. He could never quite forgive Alice because she had taken a dislike to Chetta Ingledee, at a time when the sister thought her brother's intentions in that direction were serious. On this one point Alice Norwell had held notions somewhat at variance with her established reputation for possessing an extra amount of common sense. But then it would perhaps be asking too much of the sex to hope that one woman might be entirely indifferent when the job in hand is the marrying off of another woman, particularly when woman number two is about to marry a relative of woman number one. As yet Alice, of course, knew nothing about the relations existing between her brother and her guest. To suppose she had no opinions on the subject would be contrary to reason. May was assiduously cultivating the good graces of this wise young lady, who might make an excellent sister-in-law or a very distant relation by marriage, as the case might be.

"Miss Norwell, I wish you could come out West next summer and visit us."

"I should be delighted to do so. I have never seen the prairies. It must be worth a journey of a thousand miles just to see them."

"Yes, they're very pretty in the spring, but we don't think much of them."

"That is so strange. I could live there always, I think. The broad landscape must look charming when everything is green and blooming."

"The country itself is pretty enough, but the people are not so interesting as in the city. They are not so intelligent, and have to talk mostly about the crops and the stock."

"City people are not all intelligent, May."

"Oh, I know that, but many of them are, and one can choose, you know."

Then she thought of her own choice, and was very happy that her ideal hero had come, and had not only come but intended to marry her.

"What do you think of Mr. Fred Snicker?"

"Which, that fragile gentleman with the little turn-up nose?"

"The same. He ought to be labeled, 'Don't crush,' as wholesale milliners mark their packages."

"He's very polite. I don't think he could be very bad if he tried. But then I've noticed everybody is polite in the city."

"Yes, to your face."

"Do these polite people talk about you behind your back? I thought it was only ill-bred, ignorant people who did that."

"Some of them do. Fine clothes and fine manners never changed human nature much." May's nature was so tender that she would not intentionally hurt the feelings of any one; she could not understand how others could do so, hence her trust in human nature was equal to her own kindness of heart. She was surprised at Alice's cold, matter of fact reply.

"Why, how can they?"

"Oh, backbiting comes natural to some people. But Fred Snicker said a very pretty thing about you the other evening. Shall I tell you?" May blushed, and waited with pleased expectation to hear the pretty thing. Compliments well turned are always agreeable, and flattery is a sweet incense to the god Vanity. All of us have some time bowed at his shrine, only for some of us, his officiating priest must be a person of wonderful parts.

"I overheard him say to a gentleman friend, 'That Pwayweh Floweh is a deuced pwetty bud.'" Alice imitated young Snicker's tone and manner so perfectly that her friend was convulsed with laughter. Recovering, she said:

"What a silly fellow he is." The god Vanity had found another secret worshiper, for May was not displeased with the poetical appellation thus bestowed upon her by an effusive admirer. Just then Tom came home. He had excused himself from Ingledee's at the earliest moment consistent with good breeding. Alice owed a call to a neighbor in an adjoining flat who was very sick. She suddenly remembered that she had not visited the woman all day. Perhaps there was something she might be able to do, and as it was not yet late, she excused herself for a few minutes and called on the sick woman.

May was supremely happy when Tom was present. The last few weeks had been the happiest moments of her life, though she had never known a sorrow or care. Was not this incomparable specimen of manhood all her own to have and keep till death parted them? She was one of the most for-

tunate of women. Her letters to her parents overflowed with exuberance of joy. Far different were her feelings from those of the lone woman in the splendid parlor on Fifth avenue. This one sat in the full noontide of hope, that in the uncertain twilight of threatened disaster. And what a difference in the women! The fair-haired woman before us is full of trust and tender helplessness that ever leans on others. She is tender and true, but not bold to stand forth and push her claims to a successful issue. Keenly sensitive to wrong, and resenting it, but unable in childish ignorance of human nature to wield skillfully the weapons of self-defense. The other, the dark-haired woman, is frank, generous and loving. But her bold, impetuous nature will brook no interference. She is quick to perceive wrong and able to redress it. Naturally magnanimous, she is capable of quick retaliation on a foe whom she imagines may have taken a base advantage of her. Forgiving to the vanquished, she has no mercy for the adversary in arms.

May Bryce's love was of the perfect kind that sees nothing lacking in the beloved one. For Tom Norwell she lived, and all other considerations of life were secondary to her love for him. In her inexperience and perfect trust she thought his love must be like her own except possibly that, having other interests to look after, a man's mind must occasionally be diverted from the main object of life, which for her was to love. When left alone the lovers would naturally be expected to become more communicative and confidential. But to-night the polarity of love was unbalanced, for May did most of the talking. Norwell seemed rather thoughtful and absent-minded. In truth, his visit to the Ingledees had set him to thinking. He had been off with the old love, and on with the new rather suddenly. It occurred to him that perhaps a trifle less haste might have been better. He was not conscious of any unfair dealing, nor did his second thought rate less highly the worth of the tender woman at his side, but Chetta Ingledee had been a life-long, loyal friend. She had been a friend, such as few men have the good fortune to appropriate so thoroughly as he had appropriated her. Had he made a proper return? She could find no fault if he chose another, still he lacked the courage to let her know how matters now stood with him. This cowardice suggested a middle course which was really most dangerous. His engagement with May must remain a secret, while he would still associate as a

friend with a woman who had a right to expect that further intimacy would end in a declaration of love. May found the conversation lagging in spite of her best efforts. Finally she asked Tom why he was so solemn.

"I'm not solemn. A person would not look well always laughing and trying to be funny."

"Yes, but you are dreadful poky to-night. You are not a bit like what you were when you visited us in Illinois."

"Then I was on a vacation and had laid in an extra supply of jokes. My wit was all bottled under pressure and ready to fizz as soon as the cork was drawn. I had a full assortment of laughs and smiles of all sizes and shades."

"And don't you keep good humor constantly in stock, you base deceiver?"

"No, the assortment must get low sometimes. It's bound to. But you are jolly enough to-night for both of us, little girl," said Tom quietly, placing his hand over hers. "What did you see to-day?"

"Alice and I went shopping. What lots of fine things they do have in the stores. It's better than any show to see them."

"Better than Barnum's?"

"You teasing thing. You know what I meant. I mean those things in the shops are so pretty that I want to buy them all if I could."

"May, you are learning the ways of a city woman very fast."

"Oh, but I didn't buy anything expensive, though my aunt made me a present of a fifty dollar bill just before I started. I'm trying to be economical, because you see I'm going to be the wife of a poor man, and must wait till he makes enough money to marry."

"He'll no longer be poor when he gets you, little girl. You are worth your weight"——

"Tom, don't be foolish. I'm not worth my weight in gold at all, and you know it. I'm only just a woman who will need so much to eat and so much to wear every day, and —and I'm afraid I can't do much to earn it, either. I could in the country, but the city is so strange I can't understand it at all. Tom, where do city people get so much money?"

"Some of them inherit it, some make it, some cheat others out of it."

"It's so queer to see everybody paying money for everything."

"They wouldn't get things if they didn't pay."

"I don't think I should like the city a bit. I wish we could have a pretty place up the Hudson." Tom opened his eyes very wide. "One of those queer cottages with corners all over them wouldn't cost much, would it?"

"Oh, a mere trifle. When we are millionaires we shall have such a place, May."

"Why, they don't look as if they would cost much."

"But they cost a mint, just the same, with an establishment."

"Then let's leave the hateful old city, Tom, and go to the country where we can be all to ourselves and be happy on a little."

"Is ourselves synonymous with little?"

"Now if that's the sort of jokes you keep sorted and ready for emergencies, Tom, please let the stock get low. But don't you know,—I am thinking all the time of where we shall live. Aren't you?" This question rather startled him. Then she was thinking daily, hourly of their future life, while he had considered it yet too far off to deserve any special thought at all. The contrast jarred disagreeably on him, for he was no slow-witted man who had neglected this subject for want of appreciation. He tried to turn the subject without letting her discover the real state of his feelings.

"So in your frequent cogitations you evolved the villa on the Hudson, eh?"

"I think it's not fair for you to be poking fun at me," she replied, with a pout of her red lips. Just then Alice entered, and the conversation took a new turn.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TWO YOUNG LADIES BECOME ACQUAINTED WHOSE HISTORY IS HEREAFTER CONNECTED IN MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS.—MR. QUILL MALLEY TRANSACTS FURTHER BUSINESS WITH MR. HORACE ROKER, AND THE LATTER BECOMES CONFIDENTIAL WITH MR. INGLEDEE.

A few days later, on a sunny afternoon, Tom Norwell, his sister Alice, and May Bryce determined to attend a matinée performance at one of the theatres, where a foreign actress of world-wide reputation was playing an engagement. As it was a beautiful day, and the distance not great, the party concluded to start early and walk. Sauntering past a florist's shop in Union Square, Norwell suddenly conceived the notion of buying some flowers. The three entered the shop for that purpose. To their surprise, the Norwells recognized there an old friend. The well-dressed lady standing at the counter waiting to be served, proved to be Miss Ingledee. She greeted the Norwells, and paused as she saw there was a stranger with them. Her manner indicated that she expected an introduction as she glanced at May Bryce. Norwell did not seem in any hurry to take the hint till he saw plainly that it was expected, then he said with a careless, easy grace:

"Miss Ingledee, allow me to present Miss Bryce; a friend visiting my sister," he added, by way of explanation.

Chetta Ingledee greeted this strange lady with perhaps a trifle more reserve than was her wont. She scrutinized May for some seconds, as if taking a rapid mental inventory of the girl's make-up, then recollecting that such conduct bordered on rudeness, she said pleasantly:

"Your first visit to the city, Miss Bryce?"

May answered "Yes," a little surprised that everybody should at once take it for granted that she was from the country. She scarcely comprehended that she lacked the urban manner which is only acquired by long residence in a city. As the two shop girls were busy with customers, and

the later arrivals would have to wait a few minutes, they all took seats and entered into conversation. Miss Ingledee's eye continually wandered to May, and dwelt there as long as good breeding would allow. To her this delicate-complexioned country girl was a subject of great interest. Perhaps this was the lady whom Silas had referred to by the indefinite term, "another girl." She furtively watched Tom Norwell, but he betrayed no unusual interest in Miss Bryce. He seemed in a good humor, and talked a great deal about the foreign actress whose name was then in everybody's mouth. Meanwhile he industriously traced figures with his cane on the tiles of the floor. The women did not seem to maintain a *pro rata* share of the conversation, seeing they were in a majority of three to one.

"How do you like New York, Miss Bryce?" said Chetta.

"I'm delighted with it so far. There's something new to be seen every day."

"I dare say," was the reply in a non-committal tone that might have conveyed either of two very different ideas; first, that any person, if so disposed, might see something new in New York every day; second, that only a very unsophisticated person could discover anything new for any continued period of time. On the hypothesis that language was made to conceal ideas, this little remark was a great conversational success.

The flowers were finally purchased, and as the party were separating, Chetta invited Alice Norwell and Miss Bryce to call, adding, however, that she believed Miss Norwell already owed her a call. Alice Norwell excused herself by means of one of those pleasant little fictions which ladies know how to contrive for such occasions, and which the recipient knows perfectly well how to value at its true worth, and hoped she could find it convenient soon to repay the outstanding obligation.

As Tom Norwell passed out of the door, leading the party of three ladies, Mr. Quill Malley happened along, carrying a large basket. In the absence of a delivery wagon, Quill was obliged to carry fruit to a few regular customers. This employment abstracted his attention for the time being, from the figs, and thus in addition to the advantages derived from active exercise, gave his digestive organs a brief interval of rest. Pipe, with a practical view of business, in which Quill scarcely coincided, called this "learning the business." "Ye

got to learn the business, Quill, afore ye kin be a partner. I don't take in no green partners."

That evening early Quill had a delivery to make well up town and it occurred to him that by pretending to protract the business as much as possible he might have time to call on Mr. Roker. "It hain't nothin', his goin' with my Sunday school teacher," mused Quill, "fur he's always doin' that, but mebbe that strange gal with yailer hair may be a piece of news for that rooster with the loose forrid. I'll work him fur a dollar, if the news *ain't* no count."

Revolving in his mind the thrifty determination "to work the rooster with the loose forrid for a dollar," Quill Malley found himself entering Blank street just as Mr. Horace Roker emerged from his fashionable and very select boarding house. That gentleman was starting out for his evening stroll, which usually brought him to the Argosy Club or to some other genteel resort when he had no special engagement. Roker was faultlessly dressed. His dark-colored, cutaway, frock coat fitted his handsome form without a wrinkle, almost as smoothly as a mole skin on the back of its plump little owner. His large glossy cuffs showed prominently below the sleeves of his coat. His cuff buttons consisted of a single alligator's tooth of exquisite polish set in plain gold. They had been presented by a friend who spent his winters in Florida. Roker's collar was immaculate. His flowered silk tie was a dainty product of high art in the furnishing goods line. His boots exhibited the perfection of the polishing art. He carried a twisted cane and was just lighting a choice Havana cigar. As he brought the match toward his mouth the smoothness of his spotless cuffs seemed in keeping with the smoothness of his well-shaven face and pale complexion. The glistening alligator's tooth scarcely excelled in whiteness the regular, clean teeth of the exceedingly well-kept mouth. Somehow one almost expected that the proximity of this glistening ivory would provoke a belligerent showing of the other teeth such as occurs when there is a difference of opinion between the family cat and the dog. There seemed, however, to be a perfect amity between them, and as the bloodless, nervous lips opened to receive the fragrant weed they wore an expression of self-complacency, which was the nearest they ever approached to a genuine smile.

Quill Malley instinctively admitted that this fine-looking

biped whom he had irreverently dubbed a rooster, must be a game cock if anything. Quill would probably not have been surprised to have discovered a sharp spur concealed under the well-fitting broadcloth pantaloons. He shrank back and hesitated to state his business, for he was thoroughly afraid of Roker. The latter turned into a narrow little side street and beckoned Quill to follow. Once out of sight of the open street, he began:

"What are you hanging around here for?"

"Got sumthin' to tell you," replied Quill, keeping a distance of a few feet.

"Then why don't you tell it?"

"I seen Mr. Norwell this afternoon. He's sweet on three girls."

"Is that all?"

"Mebbe he ain't sweet on but two of 'em. I dunno."

"What are they like?"

"One's my Sunday school teacher, Miss Ingledee."

"Do you think that amounts to anything?" said Roker, with a savage growl that made Quill start.

"Can't you let a feller git done? Another's tall an' has brown hair, an' brown eyes that sparkles, an' looks right into a feller, an hain't no foolishness about her."

"Humph! that's Norwell's sister."

"Tother un's not quite so tall an' has yaller hair an' rosy cheeks. Blame me, if she ain't as purty as a nactress in a winder."

"Have you ever seen him with any woman alone down town anywhere?"

"No, sir."

"If you see him with anybody—any woman—watch where he goes, and let me know." Then Mr. Roker cut the interview short by throwing Quill a dollar, and remarking: "Now go," sauntered toward Broadway.

At the Argosy Club members were coming and going as usual. Some read, a few wrote, others lounged in easy chairs in groups smoking and talking politics, the markets, or current events. Among others might be seen Tom Norwell and Silas Ingledee puffing away lazily at irregular intervals. These gentlemen were seldom seen together, although the former had at all times been so friendly with the family of the latter. They really had nothing in common. Norwell had a deep-seated disgust toward the dissipations

and fast amusements pursued by young Ingledee and his set. He had no patience with the man, but had his own reasons for keeping up at least the appearance of friendship. Silas began to show the effects of his dissipation. Wine, late hours, late suppers and other excesses had begun to tell on this young man, who was not yet twenty-three. His habits were rapidly sapping his nervous vitality.

Mr. Ingledee had attempted in vain to stay Silas in that wild career which could have but one ending—inevitable ruin. With anguish, which words may not describe, the father saw his son and only hope sink day by day into that loathsome gulf whence the bravest and strongest may never hope to climb to the full height of purity. This insolent money king, who was almost the arbiter of finances and commerce for those unfortunate sections of the country where his railroads had no rivals, had at last met a foe who proved more than his match. Sin snatched his cherished boy, his most precious possession, compared with which all the rest was nothing, away from him, and mocked his feeble remonstrances. At this court he was a humble and unsuccessful suppliant, aided by no complaisant judge or purchasable juror ready to do the bidding of a moneycrat. Ingledee had thought that possibly every young man reared in a city must sow a few wild oats. In his own simple country life no such hazardous planting had been thought of, nor would it have been tolerated by his stern father. He indulged the illusion that the young man would get a surfeit of folly and abandon it of his own accord. Farmers often believe that wheat under the adverse conditions of an unfavorable soil or season will turn into worthless "cheat." Mr. Ingledee's fond credulity went still further and believed that what was sown as cheat should finally turn into wheat. Too late had Mr. Ingledee laboriously begun to construct his protecting levees. The rushing muddy water had already swept away or fouled everything good and fair in his cherished fields and gardens, and the cheat alone flourished.

Lately Silas had begun to gamble, and his losses had been a heavy draft on the parental cash box. Now, Henry Ingledee was a man who when once thoroughly aroused on any subject whatever, took a decided stand, and no power on earth could move him. He was not arbitrary or unreasonable in the everyday affairs of life, either with his family or others. He allowed his children all the money they needed to

spend, and asked few questions about how they spent it. Any reasonable caprice they were at liberty to gratify, regardless of expense. But gambling, though a fashionable, was not to his mind a reasonable caprice. He made a wide distinction between the betting on "futures" in Wall street and the betting on "futures" at the gaming table. Like many other nice distinctions in law, medicine, theology, or social ethics, it was a distinction without a difference. But Ingledee recognized fully its validity. He would not allow gambling. In betting, he had informed Silas, it is as easy to stake one hundred thousand as one thousand. It would ruin even a modern railway king who could buy and sell old Crœsus every day. If such nonsense were allowed to go on, the losses of the operator at the gaming table might even counterbalance the gains of the operator in Wall street. Mr. Ingledee's logic as exemplified and emphasized in his own life was that the only safe way to gamble is to do it after the method of the heathen Chinee, which was described as "peculiar," but which was no more peculiar than the methods of a subsidy and land-grant railway magnate.

Ingledee, suspecting where so much money went, had set about learning the exact location of this miniature maelstrom which absorbed ready cash with such facility. He scorned to set spies to watch his son's actions, and in consequence found information not very easy to get. As he had on one or two occasions before confided in Roker, he now had recourse to that gentleman. In a roundabout way he introduced the subject of gambling in general. Roker knew his power. He would let this proud man humble himself to ask for what he wanted, otherwise he might go without information. Finding hints useless, Ingledee at length asked Roker plainly whether he had heard any rumors among young men around town of Silas's losses. Roker feigned as much surprise as was prudent, thought such things were greatly exaggerated, and finally admitted that he had heard rumors of Mr. Silas having engaged in sundry conflicts with the animal figuratively known as the tiger. From Mr. Ingledee's bitter denunciation of the vice of gaming, this deep conspirator saw at once that its continued indulgence by Silas would be an additional factor in the chain of growing differences that must sooner or later make reconciliation between father and son impossible. Hence the lower Silas sank into disreputable practices the further he fell from

his father's standard of usefulness, and the less danger there was of the son ever supplanting Roker in the important confidential position which he now held. Hence he had no intention of informing Mr. Ingledee as to the worst until the worst could not be remedied. He carelessly remarked, that in certain circles young men usually played a little. This was said in a manner which led Mr. Ingledee to believe that his confidential clerk was not aware of the extent of Silas's losses. These had been so heavy that Mr. Ingledee had plainly informed his son that unless the drain of money was greatly diminished he would put him on an allowance and pay no more of his debts.

At the Argosy Club Tom and Silas sat smoking and chatting. They were perhaps more confidential than they had ever been before. The latter had much to say about his Colorado experiences, which greatly interested Silas. Among other things the subject of gambling was mentioned and the fondness of miners for games of chance.

At this particular juncture Mr. Horace Roker sauntered into the room. As he had been unobserved by his acquaintances, for some reason best known to himself, he did not join them, but retired to a seat in an alcove near. It has puzzled a great many people, and doubtless it will remain a source of perplexity to many more till the end of time, why the Power that controls the destinies of the universe will sometimes allow everything to conspire to aid the diabolical schemes of a villain, even to the bringing about of purely fortuitous circumstances in his favor, while on the other hand unforeseen causes rise on every hand to defeat the plans of an honest man. Roker could not have arrived at a more opportune time to hear just what he wanted to know after the conversation which had occurred between him and Mr. Ingledee a few days before. He puffed his cigar apparently unconscious of all the world, but listening intently. Pretty soon Silas remarked in a scarcely audible tone:

"I don't mind telling you, Norwell, the fact is, I've dipped into that sort of thing a little myself. I lost pretty heavily and the governor threatened to sit on me if I did it any more."

"I never was in such a place in New York in my life. I suppose the games are very much like those in tho Rocky Mountains?"

"About the same thing the world over, I guess, only

these high-toned places here are very elegant. I'll take you round to Dick's place, in Occidental street, if you say so. It's only a step."

"I shouldn't mind seeing it out of curiosity, if I am not expected to play. I never play for money."

"That's all right. I'll take you in as a visitor. Come on." The two men walked out into the street, and Roker immediately passed to the other side and followed them.

Next afternoon Mr. Ingledee and Roker were closeted in his private office, as they often were, discussing important business matters. Mr. Ingledee was beginning to realize more and more the value to him of this hard-working, clear-headed, confidential clerk. He often secretly regretted that Silas had never taken to business with the same interest. He was beginning to despair that his son should ever be able to succeed him, and by his energy sustain the father's world-wide reputation. After they were through talking business Roker still lingered, and presently said:

"Excuse my interrupting you further, Mr. Ingledee"—then he hesitated, as if not knowing how to proceed.

"Go on, Roker. What is it?"

"You remember our conversation the other day about Mr. Silas?"

"Yes," said Ingledee, with a quick raising of the brows.

"You will excuse my mentioning it but"—here he hesitated again.

"Go on, Mr. Roker. If you have anything to communicate, have no hesitancy. I shall not only overlook your mentioning it, but after our previous conversations on the same subject, consider it quite a kindness on your part."

"Chancing to drop into the Argosy Club last evening, I overheard a conversation between your son and Mr. Norwell. I was so situated I could scarcely help hearing. To my surprise they were talking about gambling." Here Roker paused, and Ingledee raising his eyes slightly, after a moment, said:

"Well?"

"In a few moments they left the place and went directly to Dick's place, in Occidental street."

"If Silas dares to disobey me in this matter, I will cast him out and disown him," and a look of almost fierce anger instantly appeared on the usually calm, impassioned features.

"I thought it best for you to know," said Roker, rising to go.

"You did quite right, Mr. Roker. I appreciate your motives and thank you for it. My boy is everything to me. I would give all else I have in the world for him," continued Ingledee, half to himself, as if unconscious of Roker's presence. "It is hard to think that he has no respect either for himself or me. He forgets what I have made him." But the son had not forgotten. The father had by a lifetime of example taught him that it was right to wring money unjustly from the millions to spend selfishly on himself. The spending being easier than the getting, this sybarite offspring chose that to the neglect of the other. The father had never since he entered Wall street really had an honorable, lofty aspiration. Could he expect the spring to rise above its source? Recollecting himself, Ingledee again said:

"Thank you, Roker. Did you say he was with Tom Norwell?" he asked, as a new idea appeared suddenly to strike him.

"Yes, they went together."

"That is very strange."

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH THE BROWNELL FAMILY RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Brownells deemed it best to recognize at stated intervals the existence of the United States, republican institutions, and their fellow citizens of New York. They did this in a way which effectually prevented the assumption of undue familiarity on the part of said republican institutions toward the Brownell family. They gave at long intervals a reception conducted in the very top notch of etiquette. Probably Mr. Brownell was not ashamed of being an American citizen. At least he had never been known to say so publicly. But his actions, his speech, and his aping of old-world manners indicated that he thought such citizenship a mild sort of stigma, which, though disagreeable, was not

positively a thing to be ashamed of. It was to be borne best by persistently ignoring it and assuming instead a cosmopolitan attitude of world citizenship. No one country, however great, can conveniently hold such an American as Mr. Brownell, though on the other side of the water men of this Himalayan pride can afford to boast of belonging to the nobility of some contemptible little principality not large enough to make a decent cow ranch in Texas.

The Brownell family consisted of Mr. Brownell, his wife, a son and a daughter. The latter had married a distinguished-looking foreigner with a piratical visage, most luxuriant whiskers and an equally luxuriant blanket mortgage spread all over everything belonging to him, excepting his pedigree. Mrs. Brownell's pride did not cover so much ground as her husband's, but was better focused and consequently much more intense. She thought it very probable that she was descended from a celebrated old-world freebooter, who, by grace of his promiscuous cutting of throats and seizing of lands had, away back five hundred years ago, won from an appreciative king a patent of nobility, and become Baron of something or other, just what it was makes no difference in this history. She based this rather shadowy genealogy chiefly on the fact that her paternal ancestors held the same name as the old Baron, and came from the same country which boasted the doubtful honor of having produced that illustrious old robber. Perhaps the strongest point in favor of her claim was, that no one could prove its falsity had it been worth while to make the attempt.

To Mr. Brownell it had always been a secret cause of mild regret that he had not sprung from a marquis, a duke, a princeling of some sort, a Dutch discoverer, a fierce Huguenot pretty well slashed by Catholic swords, or in fact any ancient worthy with a gory record and a barbarous name. Even a Puritan father would have been better than nobody. Such descent would have been all the more satisfaction, since he could then have offset his wife's rascally old Baron by his own redoubtable ancestors. But to do his best Mr. Brownell could not trace his family genealogy back farther than his grandfather, who had come to this country some seventy-five years before, and laid the foundation of the comfortable fortune the family now enjoyed, by trading and investing in real estate. The grandfather and father had spent their lives getting money, which the present head of the house carefully

spent in burning incense on the family altar of Brownell pride. The Brownells, though well-known, had never been society people, because Mrs. Brownell did not care to make advances to people whose pretensions to ancestry were as yesterday compared with her own. The "best families" on the other hand did not care to worship blue blood so long drawn out, that it painfully reflected on a pedigree derived but the day before from boatmen, peddlers, and shop-keepers. When the plutocrats cared to play the sycophant to aristocracy, as many of them did, they could go to the scions of some of the very bluest blood in Europe, and lay down their dollars in exchange for the dear privilege of worshiping a name.

The Brownells now determined to pay their social debts by burning some incense publicly. They were very careful as to whom they invited to witness their sacred mysteries. For this there were two valid reasons, the blood of the bold Baron and the fact that in their estimation social recognition of any one by the Brownells, bestowed on the recipient a sort of halo that was expected to cling to him ever afterward. Hence it was eminently proper that candidates for this honor should be selected with great care. As a rule there were invited only people who lived on a fixed income, or who were prosperous in some worldly sense, or who suffered from inordinate pedigree, or who were afflicted with incurable manifestations of genius. Among the guests were the Ingledees, the Ophirs (though Mr. Ophir scarcely ever went to such places), the Chrysolites, the Norwells and the Snickers. Garmand as a distinguished foreigner allied to the nobility, was invited. May Bryce received an invitation by virtue of the fact that she was a guest of Alice Norwell, whose father had been an old friend of Mr. Brownell.

On the eventful evening the Brownell mansion, which was closed so large a part of the time, was brilliantly lighted. The great world which was too busy or too poor to engage in such things, realized that some unusual eruption was about to take place in the higher altitudes of the social structure. The people gathered in a crowd to look on, much as the Neapolitans would look at an eruption of Vesuvius. The house was brilliantly illuminated and beautifully adorned with floral devices. Elaborate preparations had been made for refreshments. Exquisite music was provided. The ballroom floor shone like a mirror for those who cared to dance. There were cards for those who liked to play, in short, every

device employed by the "best people" was here to be found for the amusement of the guest. Mr. Brownell had money, and though his interest in the American people was somewhat perfunctory, he wanted them to feel that his interest in his own reputation for doing things genteelly was very active.

At the entrance to the reception room stood Mrs. Brownell to welcome the guests. She was a tall, faded lady with a tired, dyspeptic expression, and dressed like a duchess. Her manners were frigidly though studiously polite. Her movements were rather too precise to be called graceful; they gave her the appearance of a wondrous piece of mechanism wound up for the evening. Mr. Brownell was, if possible, in a more arctic, inflexible condition than his stately wife. Though these people sincerely attempted to be entertaining the effect of their manners was decidedly refrigerating like the influence of an iceberg in a temperate sea.

Among other notable guests was the Honorable Dave Sawder. The Honorable Dave had run up from Washington where Congress was in session, on business. The legislatures of two States would soon meet in two capitals not a thousand miles from New York City, and United States Senators were to be elected. Ophir was supposed to be directly interested in both these elections. Perhaps the Honorable Dave Sawder was interested too, in some way.

Mr. Ingledee, though seldom appearing in society, was present on this occasion. During the evening, Brownell, Ingledee and Sawder became engaged in a political discussion. Sawder was reminding the other two of their neglect of political duties. With a great show of candor he went on to say much about the unpatriotic conduct of so many American citizens in this respect.

"The better classes have no right to complain of misgovernment and corruption, so long as they refuse to perform their duties at the primaries and at the polls. They complain that crooked, ward politicians and barroom loafers manage the elections. Such was the case under the opposition, as we well know."

"Oh, of course," said Mr. Brownell, "the regime of the opposition was disgraceful. But do you not think that we can safely leave it to the rank and file of our party to accomplish all that is needed?" Snicker Senior, who had joined the group, remarked:

"I think so, gentlemen. Our institutions are very flexible, gentlemen."

"Other people do not furnish the money to pay your taxes, then why should you allow them to furnish all the votes to elect the men who levy your taxes?" asked Sawder.

"I think the franchise ought to be restricted. Voting is a farce as managed nowadays," remarked Snicker.

"We business men are able to make more," replied Ingledee to Sawder, paying no attention to Snicker's remark, "by attending to business and allowing officeholders to steal a little for themselves and friends."

"Then don't complain if they steal a little more than you expected, as the opposition did. I think our party can be safely trusted, but how are you going to keep our party in power? Manifestly by rallying every man to the polls."

"For my part," Mr. Brownell went on, "I am absent abroad a great deal and I scarcely feel well enough informed to engage actively in local affairs. I instruct my business agent to vote however, in my place as it were. You know local politics is—you will excuse me Mr. Sawder, for I don't refer to national—"

"Don't be afraid of my feelings."

"Well in short, local politics is a very dirty business."

"The trouble with you fellows is that you want to go to the polls in a carriage, and you're afraid that some plebeian will jostle you, so you stay away. The old Roman was more patriotic; no matter how long his purse or how blue his blood, he buckled on his shield and went to war."

"He knew," replied Ingledee, "that he wouldn't get any of the spoils if he didn't. We make more money at home nowadays."

"No doubt of it at all," said Snicker. "During the war I scooped a clean million out of sugar. I tell you what it is, gentlemen, these fellows who are eternally growling about the rich, and bribery, and extortion, and all that, are a set of poor devils who have failed to make money themselves. Why don't they make money too? Haven't the brains, that's all." Snicker said this with an air of authority that settled the question at once and for good.

These four men represented four elements of weakness, if not danger, to our republican institutions. Brownell was the proud, but honorable, rich man who disdained to mingle with laborers and mechanics to aid the cause of honest government by his influence and counsel. Ingledee was the sort of rich man, who, by way of advancing his own interests,

thought no more of buying an alderman, or congressman than he would of buying a watermelon. Snicker represented the illiterate, superficial rich man, who cares for nothing that does not give him an opportunity to air his own importance and make a vulgar display. Dave Sawder was the kind of oily politician who deludes the people into believing him a patriot, and who is ready to be bought, at any time on any occasion, not by so many dollars counted out and receipted for, but by a block of stock quietly slipped into the hand of a discreet friend with the understanding that if a certain bill passes the stock will be valuable, if not, it will be worthless. After a vast amount of fictitious labor, consultation, and investigation, such a statesman usually concludes that the proposed measure is a great public necessity. Then ensues much speechmaking for buncombe, accompanied by an energetic throwing of dust into the eyes of the public—not for buncombe. The great statesman, if opposition develops, grows patriotic, poses as a champion of the poor man who is clamoring for increased transportation, grows frenzied at the base motives of the opposition, who, like idiots, oppose the measure on party grounds, annihilates two or three of their conceited members who dare to measure swords with him in debate, musters his forces—and the bill passes.

The spacious parlors of Mr. Brownell were overflowing with respectability, youth, and gayety. Terpischore for the time receives more attention than politics, for the young people were more inclined to resort to the ballroom for amusement. Fred Snicker flitted around May Bryce. He was in excellent spirits, robust, in fact, for him. Apparently nothing had gone wrong with his boutoniere, his perfume, or his supernal indifference to the world in general. The indications were that he was seriously smitten with the charms of the "Pwawey Floweh," as he called her when speaking to his friends. Snicker, of course, thought he had made a complete conquest. He never for a moment entertained a suspicion that any young lady could be insensible to his attractions. May Bryce treated him with the unaffected kindness which she bestowed on all her acquaintances. Young gentlemen with more conceit than brains, on meeting a lady with this charming simplicity of manner, are inclined to think her demeanor due to the irresistible fascination of their person and manners, while she, perhaps, is secretly pitying the poor fools. The young Commoner danced one set with May, and to his

delight found that "she weally did vewy well indeed." To a friend he confided this piece of information, which with much more, went to confirm the high opinion Mr. Snicker had formed of this fair Western maiden.

"Shouldn't wonder if her father owned a whole county of land, and ten thousand cows or so," he remarked to a friend. "Of course he must be deuced wich. I'll look that all up if I care to go any further."

"Snicker, if you propose for her hand I'd advise you to examine it carefully."

"What a pwepostewous pwecaution. Did you ever hear of a fellow's pwoposing for a hand that he hadn't examined carefully? But why did you say that, Stilwell?"

"Well you see, if she has been milking cows all her life her hand will have a callus on the palm."

"Now, Stilwell," said Snicker after a pause, during which the force of the remark slowly filtered into his brain, "I weally think that isn't fair, you know, about one's friends. Weally, I consider that abwupt," and he tried to bustle up a little dignity.

"Pshaw! don't be a fool, Snicker. It was only a joke. I didn't know you meant anything serious."

"You may think it a very nice joke, but I don't. In fact, I cawn't see any joke about it, I consider it abwupt." Then he walked away, trying to look ferocious, which effort might be compared with the attempt of a gosling to look savage.

Miss Harrie Snicker employed all her little wiles to capture the handsome young Englishman. Her dainty hook and silken line were always ready for use, but her angling so far had not been very successful. In spite of long practice, she had not learned to distinguish deep water from shallow, and knew no better than to troll with a spoon hook for brook trout. Just now she was trailing her spoon before a sucker. She stuck closely to Garmand and by mistake still called him "My Lord" occasionally, which title, she discovered, was not at all displeasing to his ears. Under the pretext of showing him a rare exotic she lured him into the conservatory, which was open to the guests, and detained him longer than was strictly necessary to examine the plant. They sat down for a while, and Miss Snicker did her best to sustain a conversation. But as her entire life had been spent considering the intricacies of female dress, or trying to master the newest kink in the very latest dance; and as he had spent most of his exis-

tence in the murderous occupation of killing time, this couple found little to talk about.

Fashion is a cruel master which exacts an inestimable sacrifice from its slaves. It demands not only the time and energies of the body, but a condition of its service is that the mind shall be left almost a blank. From the very nature of the pursuit, the devotee of fashion acquires few valuable ideas. The brain is filled with nonsense, which is only to be displaced by other nonsense with each new craze. Ideas are distasteful, because they necessitate thought. The time and the inclination to pursue any useful purpose or healthful activity to a conclusion, and thus reap the legitimate fruits of real effort, are both lacking. The devotee of fashion grows old with the consciousness that he or she has never evolved a beautiful or practical thought, or performed a great deed. Under the inexorable law of natural selection they must sink into utter inanity or still be the superannuated slaves of fashion. And what sight is more pitiable than a rheumatic, shriveled old beau, with his ghastly smile more suggestive of face ache than mirth, trying to keep up the absurd antics which in a very young man may be excusable. One other equals it, and that is the palsied, shrunken, sallow old belle, rouged, ruffled and bespangled, who attempts at fifty or sixty to imitate the rosy charms and artless manners of a maiden in her teens. Persistent devotion to fashion is a sure mark of mental inferiority.

The conversation between Harrie Snicker and Wyndleigh Garmand was necessarily somewhat disjointed and not particularly edifying, except, perhaps, to the student of social ethics. She wished to appear greatly interested in everything he said or did, while he thought to himself it was a "great bore, you know," to be obliged to entertain all the time instead of being entertained. He had been relating some of his experiences in the West, and among other topics got around to mining. He frequently mentioned shafts in that connection, till finally, Miss Snicker's curiosity being aroused, she asked:

"Mr. Garmand, did you bring back one of those shafts among your collection of curiosities?"

"No, certainly not," said he in some surprise, "you see this shaft is aw—in the ground, you know."

"Couldn't they dig one up?"

"Really, Miss Snickeh, you don't quite aw—understand.

The shaft is only a—really now, what is it—why, in fact, you see it's nothing but a hole in the ground." Garmand was desirous of getting rid of this piece of insipidity. He was oblivious to his own inability to interest people. Had he been reminded of it he would only have asked, "Pon my soul, why should I be under the necessity of entertaining anybody? Now, really, I'm surprised that any one expected me to put myself out that way, you know." But he was very conscious of her stupendous ignorance. Passing out they saw Alice Norwell and May Bryce talking to two gentlemen. Miss Snicker remarked in no very low tone.

"I think the Norwells must be very poor now. I don't see how they can afford to go into society. Why don't people who can't afford it keep where they belong! They certainly don't belong in society. The idea of poor people going into society. It's dreadful, and then poverty is not interesting at all. It is so common."

"Yes, I believe you are right, Miss Snickeh. I think myself poverty is deuced common, and admitted generally to be aw—in fact, vulgah."

The young lady was not yet ready to surrender "My Lord." On the dancing floor a party was forming for a Virginia reel as a change from the giddy whirl of over-much waltzing. Miss Harrie said she believed the dance was brought from Virginia, and it was very good for variety. There was no help for it, so he asked her to be his partner, casting rather wishful eyes, however, at one or two other young ladies of his acquaintance. Young Snicker led out Miss Bryce with such a profusion of gallantry that his bowing, smirking and excess of little attentions embarrassed her a trifle.

May had consented to this dance because it was a reel. Waltzing had made her giddy and somewhat short of breath. She did not feel well. She was weary with all this display, confusion of voices, music and overheated air. Tom Norwell had led out Chetta Ingledee. As May glanced at them taking their places, her heart suddenly sank. She experienced an overpowering sense of loneliness and an indefinable feeling of dissatisfaction. This feeling amounted almost to distress. She was on the point of asking Snicker to lead her to a seat. Then she knew that would attract attention which her sensitive nature shrank from. Suddenly, without knowing why, she wished she were in her prairie home and had never seen

New York. Was she jealous? No. Tom Norwell's inviting Chetta to dance was not only perfectly proper but to be expected, seeing they were old friends. Looking at Chetta, however, May thought she detected an air of triumph expressed in the bearing of that young lady.

May Bryce realized the dissimilarity of taste and feeling existing between herself and most of the people around her. She saw the impossibility of her ever leading or even occupying a prominent position in this elegant society. Her simple tastes, country breeding and her keen appreciation of truth, which made it impossible for her to countenance even false appearances or shams of any kind, all combined to make her dissatisfied with the empty compliments, the glitter and the hollowness of fashionable life. It was all foreign to her nature. She was not at home in such surroundings, despite her best efforts to appear so, and save mortification to her friends. She made one or two blunders even in the simple figures of the Virginia reel, to her great disgust with herself.

May went to her seat, looking ill. The color on her cheeks was too brilliant for perfect health. To inquiries from one or two ladies, she replied that nothing was the matter. Snicker was anxious to serve her. He had a profusion of suggestions. She assured him that she wished nothing. She was only a little tired. Finally, as a kindness to him in accepting some service, she allowed him to bring her a glass of water. Miss Ingledee came and sat beside May, and Mr. Snicker excusing himself, left them alone.

"You are not feeling well, Miss Bryce. I think the room is too warm for you."

"It is a little too much exertion I think, Miss Ingledee." In spite of her efforts to appear calm, a flush suffused her features. May hated this tell-tale glow in the presence of the woman before whom she wished to appear indifferent.

"I think, Miss Ingledee, I have danced too much this evening." Chetta Ingledee's heart softened toward this painfully sensitive girl. She tried to put May at her ease by turning the conversation in a different direction. They chatted a few minutes on various topics, but May Bryce all the time could not get rid of the notion that this dark-eyed young lady was, under the guise of careless conversation, trying to read her. In consequence May grew self-possessed and reticent, as Chetta grew more communicative.

"You have excellent friends in the Norwells," she said.

"Yes, very nice, indeed."

"Old friends of your father's family, I suppose?" Chetta put this innocent query as a feeler, while her manner was apparently most indifferent.

"No, not exactly. I had letters to Miss Alice Norwell from a friend of hers."

"You could not have found better people to introduce you into good society."

"They have been very kind."

"They are, I might say, old friends of our family."

"Indeed?" May thought it strange that Alice had not mentioned the Ingledees oftener. As for Tom, well, he had never mentioned them at all.

"Then Miss Norwell is an old friend of yours?"

"Yes, that is to say, an old acquaintance. But I am better acquainted with her brother. He and I are very old friends. We took French lessons together once in one of Professor Dubois's classes."

There was something in the tone of this innocent-looking piece of information that sent a pang into May's heart. She thought this woman meant something in making the remark, else why take the trouble to tell a stranger how her acquaintance with Tom Norwell began? This girl was an old friend of Tom's, and while she did not doubt him she distrusted the woman. Chetta, on the other hand, thought this simple country girl, with the pretty face and artless manners, was a great deal deeper than she appeared. As a possible rival May Bryce might be dangerous, but Chetta trusted to her own knowledge of the world, and the hold she fancied she already had on Tom Norwell to come out best in the end.

The guests were now rapidly saying good-night to the stately host and hostess. Mr. Brownell's face wore that air of reserved self-satisfaction which so becomes the consciously proper man who has done the proper thing in a proper manner at the proper time. Mrs. Brownell's faded, tired face wore a resigned expression of duty well done. She had wielded the social scepter full as well as her reputed ancestor, the old Baron, had ever wielded his dripping sword in "ye good old days." At the hour of two the doors closed on the last guest, and the social debts of the Brownells were paid for two or three years to come.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MAKING A U. S. SENATOR.—MISS CHETTA INGLEDEE ACCIDENTALLY OBTAINS SOME VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION, AND MR. QUILL MALLEY EXECUTES A URRINT.

United States Senators were to be elected during the winter in several States, and it behooved Messrs. Ophir and Ingledee to be looking after their interests. Ingledee's interests being on the Pacific coast, where such things are more easily managed, he could safely leave this part of the work to his very efficient partners. Ophir had large interests in States adjoining New York, in addition to his great Continental & Pacific. It was absolutely necessary in order to carry out successfully their daring plans for robbing the people, that these men have trusty agents in the guise of public servants in the halls of Congress and on the floor of the United States Senate. On the whole it was easier to secure Senators than Congressmen. Under our present system of election, and equilibrium of parties, a man with money can go into a State legislature and buy up the few doubtful votes necessary to his purpose, with less risk and expense than he can buy the popular votes at the polls. The legislative palm is itchy, and the legislative mouth which manifests a disagreeable disposition to open on all other subjects can on this one be very close; the popular palm may itch as badly, but the popular mouth opens in a geometrical ratio with its number.

The Honorable Dave Sawder had appeared in New York at about the time of the meeting of these State legislatures. To-day he had an appointment with Ophir at the well-known Big Sachem saloon and lunch rooms on Occidental street. It was just as well perhaps at this particular time for the reputation of legislators, that any interview between them and Mr. Ophir be strictly private. Ophir was known to have a great deal of money, and it goes without saying that the average legislator is in great want of money, otherwise he would not be an office-holder at all. If it were known that these

men had a confidential interview the papers might talk, and the legislator's reputation might be injured. It may excite some curiosity in the mind of the reader as to how a tricky politician's reputation could suffer injury. Well, the sin of bribery, like some other very popular failings, entails serious consequences to the delinquent—when he is caught in the act. As for Ophir's reputation, it was like that which Cæsar wished his wife to have, though for a different reason. He had got above suspicion, because suspicion could no longer add anything to the notoriety he had achieved.

Sawder stepped into the Big Sachem about ten o'clock in the forenoon. At that hour there would be very few persons about the place. Nodding pleasantly to the barkeeper he told him to say, when the other gentleman came, that he was waiting. Then he stepped through a latticed swinging door and disappeared in the rear.

A description of this elegant resort of refined dissipation may not be amiss here. Let not the reader picture this saloon as a dingy place, with a dirty floor covered with sawdust, and dotted with filthy spittoons. Everything was pleasing to the eye. Had Pope resorted here perhaps he might never have pronounced vice to be a monster of hideous mien. Here vice was no monster so far as external appearances went. The floor was composed of small fancy-colored tiles laid in geometric patterns, which made it look almost like a handsome mosaic. The walls were covered with beautiful pictures of nymphs, battle scenes and mythological subjects. The ceiling was handsomely frescoed and the highly-ornamented bronze gasaliers were rare works of art. The gorgeous wall-paper ended at the floor in a rich dado of dark maroon color and ample width. The counters and woodwork of the place were of costly foreign woods, whose colors contrasted and blended harmoniously. A handsome nickel foot rest ran round the bar so that the devotee at the shrine of Bacchus could imbibe his potations in an easy attitude. This was a proper concession to that national characteristic which makes it impossible for an American to be at ease till he has one foot (or both) elevated somewhere. The cuspidors were elegant porcelain affairs that might vie in beauty with mantel vases. In the rear were luxuriously furnished stalls with doors, affording entire privacy. Here were elegant clouded-marble tables for those who chose to sit over a bottle of wine. The Big Sachem was no resort of the vulgar. Its patrons demanded that sin be made attractive.

Mr. Ophir entered with a quick, business-like step, and speaking a few words to the presiding genius, passed to the rear. The barkeeper followed with some choice cigars on a tray. Mr. Ophir never drank liquors of any kind either in public or private. As the door closed on the waiter Ophir began:

"I am in something of a hurry, Sawder. I have an appointment with Ingledee at twelve."

"Well, what do you wish done?"

"It is necessary that Senator A be re-elected at Aries, and that Senator C be defeated at Cancer. The contest will be very close in the latter case and our votes will turn the scale in favor of Mr. B."

"Is it really necessary, Mr. Ophir, to slaughter Senator C? He is a strong man, and one of our best party workers."

"C doesn't suit me."

"But his vote is needed by the party. Of course you are aware that the party has done much for your interests."

"And I have done a great deal for the party. You know Sawder, you never could have been re-elected last year without me. Two years from now we shall put you into the Senate from this State. It is safe doctrine you know, to help those that can help you."

"That's all right, but I'm sorry for Senator C. He is a first-class man."

"Yes, but he's got a notion into his head that nobody is honest but himself. He wants to be continually nosing into other people's business. That funding act of his cost the Continental & Pacific a great deal of money before it was finally defeated. He is sure to bring it up again. He must go. I'll tell you what it is, Sawder, the railroad interests of this country will not consent to be regulated by intermeddling Bureaus and Commissioners, and have their private affairs looked into."

"Then you consider the Continental & Pacific as private property?"

"Well, it amounts to that."

"Still we must be cautious; you know the people built these roads and some people still insist they ought to have a say in controlling them."

"That shows what fools they are. If they build a road and give it to me, then it's my private property. I'll do as I please with it. I'll charge what I please for freights. If they

don't like it let them grumble all they please. I don't see how they are going to better themselves unless they choose to haul their goods by wagon. I have the advantage, and I intend to keep it."

"Certainly, your interests must not be interfered with. I only make the suggestion that caution is necessary. How much money are you willing to spend on these two Senatorships?"

"Let me see. We must look over the ground carefully." Here Mr. Ophir produced a thin memorandum book containing a complete list of the members of the two legislatures in question. After the name of each member was a brief abstract of his business or profession, his financial standing, his religion, previous record, habits, etc. Ophir began reading this roll.

"These whose names are checked it is useless to approach. They cannot be bought, at least for any price we can pay, though I think sometimes every man has his price." Over half of the names were checked.* "These marked with a star are doubtful. They are new men and must be sounded carefully. These marked with a cross are old members and all right. We know their price. There's Q; he comes from a high-toned community, and has an exaggerated notion of his influence. He will ask five thousand dollars for his vote, but will take twenty-five hundred. In fifteen years of public life I don't think he ever got more than that. There's Y—" and Ophir laughed as his name was mentioned—"he is a seedy country lawyer. He doesn't know how to hold out. He's always afraid he'll be left and get nothing. It's a waste of money to offer him over two hundred. There's X"—

"Hold on, Ophir, I don't know about X. I am slightly acquainted with him, and I think he cannot be bought."

"I happen to know better, Sawder. The last time our confidential agent of the Appalachian line went over the road he learned that X was engaged in a petty fraud, by which he beat his school district out of one hundred dollars. X is all right. Now, W's case is different."

"W stands very high in his community, and is a member of a strong church organization."

"W is a good risk. He is none too honest in my opinion, and he has a heavy mortgage on his property to fall due

*Note 8.—Venality of Legislators.

soon. He will come high. We'll wait till we see if we need him."

And so they ran rapidly through the lists for the two States.

"It will take about one hundred thousand dollars," remarked Sawder.

"Yes, those things cost more and more every year."

"Do you want the same old parties to manage it?"

"Yes, Sigma may go to Aries. He is acquainted best there, and is a personal friend of Senator A. Let Alpha take C's case in hand."

"Alpha and Sigma are both in Washington now."

"There's plenty of time to get them here before they are needed. Your part is merely to give them these data and state just what is expected."

"Hickley is a warm friend of Senator C, and he will be over there next month trying a noted land case. Do you think he will give us away?"

"I think not. In the first place he knows nothing, and in the second place, he's not liable to try to find out much as long as he has in his possession a block of C & P bonds, which he received once for services."

"True enough. I had forgotten that."

The two men now rose and walked into the front room. Ophir paid for the cigars and they left the place, no one thinking or caring anything about their business.

On the same forenoon Miss Ingledee was down town shopping. Toward noon she called at her father's office, intending to go out and take lunch with him, as she occasionally did. It happened that he was not in. Stepping into his private office she sat down to wait. A Japanese screen that folded like the leaves of a book stood near the window facing the street. It prevented intrusive eyes from gaping curiously into the office of the great millionaire from the outside. Chetta passed behind the V-shaped screen, seated herself in the window, and was soon absorbed in a new book she had bought. It was a very popular novel, and certain events in it excited a most intense interest. She read for some time with such absorbing interest that she became almost oblivious to surroundings. After a while she became aware that her father and another man had entered the room and seated themselves not more than ten feet away. At first she thought it was only Roker. He would leave

in a few moments, and then she would suddenly appear and surprise papa. But it was not Roker, and after awhile she thought she could make out Ophir's voice. It mattered little, she thought, if she did hear. They were talking stocks, bonds, first mortgages, and all those things which women seldom try to understand.

Chetta felt ashamed of her situation, but would have now felt still more ashamed to make her appearance. Her father would be greatly offended at her. What if he should discover her there? She held her place and listened. The men were busy talking over some great financial undertaking. She had an idle curiosity to know how such men talked business.

"Ingledee, are you fully prepared to back me in this movement?"

"Yes, I think so. We must help each other. I may need you yet."

"Of course I do not expect you to do it for nothing. I own a majority of Gridiron stock, but you can get plenty on the street to make a handsome thing on. The last six per cent. dividend was an unusually favorable showing. We saved everywhere we possibly could, and held back two months' pay from the men on the plea that we were unusually hard up."

"And probably contributed a little cash out of your own pockets," remarked Ingledee, drily.*

"Exactly, to make a good showing. That was merely business, you see. On that dividend, and a little stiffening of the market, we can run Gridiron stock up, I think, to one hundred and twenty."

"Easily, I should say. What's your plan on the drop?"

"Knock the pegs out at one blow and down go stocks to seventy."

"And the lambs that miss the first shearing will be ready for the second," said Ingledee, with a hearty laugh.

"Exactly. Then it's settled?"

"Yes."

"That Englishman, Garmand, and some of his friends are short. But John Bull has lots of capital he doesn't know what to do with." The two men rose and left the office together.

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*Note 9.—Bogus dividends.

Chetta Ingledee listened to this conversation with astonishment. Was this the way her father made his money? Then her surprise gave way to indignation, which in turn was followed by an overwhelming sense of shame. She had seen her father, whom she loved and honored above all others, fall from his high estate. Strive as she would, she could only consider him a dishonored man. No more could he be to her the trusted idol he had been. She quickly resolved to defeat this wicked plot, so far as her friends were concerned. She would warn them of the danger at the risk of offending her father. His purpose was wrong. She owed no fealty to wrong, even if it was of her father's planning. Suddenly Chetta recollected that it was not safe for her to remain longer in the office. She might be discovered at any moment. She rose to leave the room, and at the same instant Mr. Horace Roker opened the door and entered. Knowing that Mr. Ingledee would not return before lunch, Roker had entered to get some memoranda he needed in preparing some important documents. He was a little surprised at meeting Chetta there.

"You here, Miss Ingledee? This is quite a little surprise." The surprise he feigned was not half what she felt at his very inopportune appearance. But she replied carelessly:

"I came in to see papa awhile ago, but I believe he has gone to lunch." Roker was puzzled. He had just seen Ingledee leave the office in company with Mr. Ophir. Through the open door of his own office opposite he could certainly have seen any one enter Ingledee's private office. He had not seen this woman enter, yet here she was.

"Have you any message to leave, or is there anything I can do for you, Miss Ingledee?"

"Nothing at all, thank you, Mr. Roker."

After she was gone, Roker sat a few minutes thinking. Here was some mystery. The new movement to be made in Gridiron was, of course, known in its general aspects to Roker as confidential private secretary. A designing man himself, he naturally suspected others. His eye fell on the screen, and he at once had the key to the situation. The girl had been listening, he was satisfied. But for what purpose? She certainly had no private deals of her own, as some ladies had unknown to their husbands or fathers, and which involved them in a great many embarrassments. She had no need to make money in this way. Was she obtain-

ing information for some one else? That was more probable, and for whom could it be, if not for Tom Norwell? He was satisfied that she favored Norwell, and his own prospects rested chiefly on his hope to be able to drive Tom from the field in some way. This matter was worth looking into. If she had obtained such information for Norwell doubtless he would meet her soon to get it. Perhaps that very evening as the most convenient time, and at her home, where he was in the habit of calling. The chances of Roker's learning anything definite were poor, but it cost nothing to follow up his suspicions so far as the interview that evening was concerned.

Roker put on his hat and went out to the restaurant where he took lunch usually. He was very abstemious in his habits. A cup of coffee, a roll with butter, and a slice of cold meat constituted his regular lunch, which was dispatched to-day in fifteen minutes, ten of which were spent waiting for the food to appear. Leaving the cafe, Roker indulged in a stroll, apparently for exercise. By chance or otherwise, he happened by Pipe Malley & Co.'s store, and dropped in ostensibly to purchase an orange. Quill Malley, with much cleaner hands and face than usual, recognized his old acquaintance and experienced no little alarm as he came forward to serve the customer, hardly knowing whether this was private business or a commercial transaction. Pipe was on the sidewalk showing a customer some bananas.

"I want a good Florida orange," said Roker, throwing down a quarter. Then in a lower tone, "Never mind the change." He continued rapidly: "Mr. Norwell is quite well acquainted with your Sunday school teacher, isn't he?"

"I guess he be."

"Calls on her frequently, doesn't he?"

"I reckon he does," said Quill, nervously glancing at the door. Then he added:

"Say, Mister, don't give it away to Pipe. He'd about skin me if he knowed it."

"All right. Could you find time to be around her house about half-past seven to half-past eight this evening?"

"Sence I'm workin' fur the firm it's hard to git off. I've a urrint up that way and kin make it if I play it that I played on the way."

"All right, play it that way."

"Pipe'll give me fits I reckon, fur it."

As Roker passed out he remarked to Pipe, "Pretty smart clerk that of yours. He knows his business."

"Say Quill, wot kind o' taffy wus that feller reelin' off fur ye?"

"He says I'm a smart clerk, an' I reckon he knows."

"Well, I hope I never see anybody so fresh as you be. Wy, Quill, he was makin' fun of yer."

"That's the way you alliz talk when you don't want me to git ahead an' be partners."

"Quill, you've a great head fur that partnership racket. I'd like to know who furnished the capital fur this hyur investment, an' who first rented the store, an' who furnishes the sand fur the business? When you have all them things you kin be partners. That chicken was jist givin' you a breeze. He seen them ears. In spite o' everything said and done them ears hain't clean yet an' them socks—Quill, pull up them socks."

Quill made a vain attempt to pull up his socks to meet his pantaloons which daily, with the boy's rapid growth, receded toward his knees. His brother's disparaging remarks humbled and silenced him. Quill was conscious that he had not the "snap" of Pipe, that he could not run their little business if he had it. Pipe's criticisms and his advice which seemed very hard to take, were well meant, but none the less did they wound. Without intending to be a tyrant, Pipe had become a merciless one. Such was his ascendancy that Quill positively dreaded his displeasure, though since they had gone into business Pipe never thought of physical violence to which he often resorted when they sold papers together. The most refined tyranny perhaps in the world is that which one relative may exercise over another. Its stings are all the more poignant because the victim feels that, instead of cruel words far more cruel often than blows, he or she is entitled to love, sympathy and protection. Pipe meant well, but sometimes forgot that his brother had feelings.

Chetta Ingledeew went home, troubled greatly. It pained her to think that her father would do a dishonest thing. Was all this fabulous wealth the result of such miserable trickery under the pretended guise of business? She despised it all and hated herself for enjoying money, so thoughtless of its source. Her conscience was keenly alive to right and wrong. She was miserable. She sat and thought. Might there not be two sides to the question? Perhaps her father's moneyed

rivals had often attempted similar dishonest practices directed against him. Yet that to her conscientious mind did not make it right. One wrong never justifies two wrongs. She reasoned further. Garmand's name had been mentioned. Why should she warn this foreigner who, like most foreigners, was anxious to make something out of the Yankees. As for Tom Norwell he had little money any way, and certainly knew better than to risk it in Wall street. Then the treason to her father. Her filial instinct revolted at the thought. No, she could not betray him if he were wrong.

Silas came in before dinner. In pursuance of her father's wishes and her own inclination, she now improved every opportunity of making home attractive to him and winning him from his vicious ways. As yet she had met with no perceptible success, though the young man dined at home oftener, and twice or thrice lately he had accompanied his sister to the theatre and elsewhere.

"Silas, do you think you will ever go into the office?"

"I hardly know myself. The Governor wants me to pretty badly."

"What do you think of the business any way?"

"I think it's a rattling good business. It's a good deal better than a news-stand," he added, with a laugh.

"I don't mean about its paying. Do you think it is always—isn't it sometimes—?"

"Not just square, Chet?"

"Yes, not precisely honorable." It cost the sister an effort to use the word honorable this way in connection with her father's business. The brother never gave it a passing thought.

"Chet, I advise you not to bother your head about such things. I don't. So the dollars flow in freely, that's enough for me."

"But then suppose Papa's success should induce others to invest and lose?"

"They needn't do it unless they choose."

"But suppose some of our acquaintances—for example, Mr. Garmand"—

"Or Tom Norwell? That's all right too. If a business man has a good-looking daughter or an agreeable wife who brings gentlemen to the house, and the man makes money out of that acquaintance, what's the harm? A good-looking daughter may be a great advantage to some men."

The bare idea of using friendship for so base and mercenary a purpose caused Chetta's cheeks to tingle with shame. But the brother had only expressed bluntly a proposition that after all might rest on a basis of truth. She could not help thinking that there was at least a disagreeable suspicion of truth lurking around it. It did not imply any set purpose on the part of her father, yet still she might be the unconscious means of luring men to certain ruin. She shuddered at the possibilities involved in her present social surroundings. She felt like a traitor to her father for having entertained the thoughts she had against him, and yet reflection told her that this tumult of dissatisfied feelings arose from a conscientious desire to do right in spite of possible consequences. In her rebellious mood she hated her wealth and its baleful influences, and loathed the insinuation that she might attract men into this fatal valley of Upas. At dinner Mr. Ingledee was in an uncommonly good humor. Silas had made no serious drafts on him lately. Doubtless the young man would yet come to his senses, for here he sat like a dutiful son and affectionate brother at the family board, trying his best to perform his social duties. If Chetta appeared absent-minded and inclined to silence Mr. Ingledee never noticed it, for Silas more than made up the deficiency by his unusual flow of spirits. This girl who could not perpetuate the family name amounted to little in the father's eyes, though he admitted she was a handsome woman, as she presided there at his table in a rich wine-colored velvet dress with a flower in her luxuriant dark hair. Perhaps Silas had at last discovered that he could no longer rely on his father's blind, unreasoning affection as a means of opening the parental purse to all sorts of wild extravagance. At any rate, he had the tact to see that he could recover lost ground at any time by reformation or the pretense of it.

As Chetta sat after dinner looking out on the broad avenue, and watching the people as they passed beneath the street-lamps before the house, she noticed a dark figure pass up and down several times on the opposite side of the street. Sometimes it disappeared, but would at short intervals reappear again. She thought little of this, but kept musing on the important event of the day—the scene in her father's office. Finally Chetta remembered a shopping errand to be done in a neighboring street. For such trifles she often went herself instead of sending a servant. Putting on her cloak and hat,

she passed out of a side door and reached the street by a narrow walk. There she discovered the figure which had been loitering in the vicinity to be her hopeful pupil, Quill Malley. That young gentleman, who was partially concealed behind the steps of the next house, was considerably startled by her appearance.

"Why, Quill, is it you who have been walking backward and forward here for the last half hour? Why did you not ring at once? What do you want?"

"Nothin', said Quill, hanging his head. "Jis' thought I'd take a walk up this way."

"But you must ring, Quill, when you want me. I may not see you if you don't."

To do Quill justice he felt heartily ashamed to think he had been guilty of spying on the best and almost the only friend he had ever had, excepting his mother. As long as he watched Tom Norwell and earned some spending money, it was a very easy affair. But Quill's convictions were not very deep or lasting. His training had made his conscience like that of most of his class, very elastic. Then Chetta's supposition that as a matter of course he wanted her, furnished a ready means of escape from his awkward position.

"I didn't think ye'd want the like 'o me a ringin', Miss Ingledee."

"Quill, when you have business, I have plenty of time. You wanted something?"

"Can't say's I do," said Quill, considerably embarrassed. Where a downright fib was needed to bring himself out of difficulties, Quill was fertile in expedients. But he could not think of anything plausible just then to account for his visit. He hesitated to tell Chetta an out-and-out lie, besides, he knew she could see through an improbable fiction.

"Don't things go right at the store?" In an instant he was at ease. Here was a topic that would serve his purpose.

"No, they don't. Pipe gits bossier every day."

"But then some one must manage things," she said, in a tone of remonstrance.

"I reckon they must, but he don't give a feller no show 'tall. I ain't partners and he is. He's got the capital an' wants a hundred dollars from me afore he'll let me be partners. So he keeps a jumpin' on me. Wen a feller's doin' the best he kin wot's the use to keep alliz a settin' on 'im?"

"You must work hard, economize, and buy an interest."

"Wot'll three dollars a week do? Three dollars a week ain't goin' to buy out any business very soon."

"Does your mother charge you for board?"

"She ain't yet, but I guess she will afore long."

"Then you should lay by one dollar every week. Give the other two dollars to your mother for board and repairing your clothes. At the end of a year you will have saved fifty dollars. I'll put fifty more to it and then you can become a partner."

"A year!" exclaimed Quill, appalled at the thought of such an astounding lapse of time. "I never could slave an' save forever and make a misard o' myself like that. No money for shows an' stuff! Wot's the use of livin' if you've got to be a nigger? I reckon Pipe could do it, but tain't my idee. Spose I'll alliz haf to work on sal'ry."

"Think it over, Quill," said Chetta kindly, as she started. "A year isn't very long when you are young." Quill started off muttering to himself, "Wonder if I ain't a gittin' old every day like other folks."

Quill was wofully behind time. Pipe was already putting up the shutters. He greeted Quill with a shrewd intimation that the other twin was playing off.

"Quill, you're gittin' slower than m'lasses in Jenooary. You're soldierin', don't tell me. You're up to sumthin'."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS.—GRIDIRON SOARS.

The great movement in Gridiron stocks was inaugurated according to programme. The Gridiron system was one which had been graphically described as beginning nowhere and running nowhere. It had a perfect network of road, located in several Western States, and each new extension or consolidation resulted in the issue of a few more millions of stock to be bought up by a confiding public, and swell the sum total of the good Mr. Ophir's snug pile. Quite a flurry was created in the stock market. Other securities advanced in sympathy. The shorts were unmercifully squeezed. Among them was Garmand, who had asked his broker to

sell for future delivery a large block of Gridiron at a figure a trifle below market rates. In other words, he and other bears bet that stocks would rule lower. Settling day was at hand and stocks which were to be delivered at a price away below par must be bought in the market above par. Garmand was nipped to the tune of fifty thousand dollars. Tom Norwell, who had nibbled around the Wall street bait a little lately, was not caught at all.

Garmand called on his friend Norwell to get, if possible, a little consolation out of the present unlucky turn of fortune. He was very rich, however, and really could afford to lose fifty thousand if he chose. He was a regular visitor at the Norwells now. Tom was a confidential friend, and the company of two such charming ladies as Alice and May Bryce, doubtless had much to do with his visits. The conversation in the presence of the ladies having been to some extent on the subject of stock speculations, Alice suspected that Garmand had met with losses. Her brother's constant inclination to take great risks in order to make money rapidly, was a source of apprehension to her. She feared that he might lose what still remained to him. Wilson, in his letters to Alice, frequently referred to the rapidity with which he was growing rich out of the Amazon mine. Doubtless he wrote more fully the details of his enterprise to Norwell, for after these letters she had noticed that Tom invariably became restless and dissatisfied with his present condition of inaction.

After Garmand's departure Alice, improving an opportunity while they were alone, asked Tom if Garmand had not lost some money.

"Yes, some fifty thousand on Gridiron," answered Tom, carelessly.

"Did you lose anything, Tom?"

"No, I had a little deal on the other side and made a thousand. Wish I had put in every dollar I could raise. I should have made a little fortune."

"Oh, Tom, please don't try speculation. It isn't safe, and it's demoralizing."

"Especially when you lose."

"Suppose you win, it isn't right. The thousand dollars you got is one thousand lost by some one else and that person got nothing."

"He got his chance, and that is all I had."

But the system is wrong. It places temptation in the

way of clerks and poor men who hope to win money easily. Many a young man has been ruined by it."

"I'm not responsible for the system."

"But you encourage it. And you know that it brings ruin in the end. The clerk takes money from his employer's drawer to bet on stocks. The man on salary gives the broker what he should spend on his family."

"Sister, where have you been studying finance and political economy? You're a tip top lecturer."

"Oh Tom," she pleaded, "don't talk in that way. You know there is only sorrow in store for those who indulge such illusive hopes. Think what it has already done for us!" She thought a reference to their father's tragic end might influence him. He made no answer. "Think of the moral wrecks—"

"Moral wrecks! Well, that is a good idea. Do I look like a moral wreck, sister? Ha ha! I'm a pretty comfortable wreck." His jeering tone pained her. He went on after a pause, "Well Alice, I'll speak in earnest if you wish it. I am determined to make my fortune. It is useless for you to talk to me. I tell you I will have my own way. I think you are not competent to advise me on this subject."

The conversation was at an end. Alice Norwell went into the little back parlor where May was, and sat down. Her heart was full of anguish. Her brother had not only repulsed her well-meant efforts for his good, but for the first time in his life had been positively unkind. Tears welled to her eyes and trickled down her flushed cheeks. May who had been examining the engravings of a book, suddenly looked up to show to Alice something of special interest. In her surprise she exclaimed:

"Alice, dear, you are crying. What is the matter?"

"I am foolish to-night. I have been thinking. That's all."

"But you must not think of such disagreeable things. There is something wrong."

"It is nothing much. Sleep I think, is what I need. I shall retire." Then abruptly bidding May good-night, Alice immediately went to her own bedroom.

May resumed her examination of the engravings when she saw that Alice had no confidences to bestow. She tried to become interested in the book, but could not. She laid it aside. It was her turn to think. What could have hap-

pened? She left the brother and sister quietly conversing. There had been no loud words, apparently no quarrel, and yet there was some serious jar, for she had never before seen Alice Norwell in tears. Alice was not the sort of woman whose eyes are a kind of animated sprinkler set to work on the most trivial occasions. Then May wondered if in any way she could be connected with Alice's grief.

Since coming to New York May had for a few weeks been in a new world. The people she met, their habits, their ways of life, their dress, conversation and manners, were all new to her. She had learned a great deal, and above all, one to her very important fact. She could never enter this social fabric and become a part of it fitting into her assigned place as if she had grown there. This sweet flower of womanhood, possessing such exquisite tenderness and simplicity, could no more have sprung up in the artificial atmosphere of a great city, than could the beautiful water lilies of her prairie home have flourished on the dry beaches of Coney Island. Nor could it adapt itself to anything but a sort of artificial existence amid such surroundings. There is a naturalness even in being artificial, and this ease of manner May despaired of ever acquiring. When she saw the stately Mrs. Brownell receiving with the dignity and grandeur of a duchess, she felt that she would cut but a sorry figure entertaining society. May was quick of observation and facile in adapting herself to circumstances when she found things congenial to her tastes. She had really got along very well in spite of her innate dislike of this cumbrous social code, which to her, seemed often to stand in the way of natural courtesy. But her extreme sensitiveness exaggerated the little mistakes she made. She constantly feared that others were watching her. She was naturally very sensitive as to what others thought of her, and for a friend to feel distressed at any fault of May's, usually caused her more anguish than it did the friend.

This morbid, over-sensitive feeling is a constant source of misery to its unhappy possessor, and unfortunately often grows almost to a possessing demon unless rigorously kept down. May imagined that Alice was offended at her. She set to work to find a cause. She retired to her room but no sleep came to her wakeful eyes. There could be but one cause, and that was her intimacy with Tom Norwell. But their engagement was a secret, though Alice certainly knew they were good friends. Why did she not, if she disapproved,

show signs of displeasure sooner instead of shedding mysterious tears in this fashion? May tossed restlessly till nearly midnight but could make nothing of it. Sleep was impossible. Her active brain conjured up all sorts of dire possibilities until, unable to lie longer and endure such nervous tension, she rose and went to Alice's room and knocked at the door. Alice too had lain for some time thinking, and had just fallen into a light slumber. She woke with a start and called, "Who's there?"

"Only May. Will you let me in please?"

"What do you want, May?" said Alice opening the door.

"I couldn't get to sleep. I've been thinking, so I came to see if you would let me sleep with you."

"Why yes, if you wish it, to be sure." Alice had lighted the gas and by the light plainly saw May's nervous manner which had in it an appearance almost of distress. This beautiful young girl in her night dress had never seemed to her so much like a helpless child before. She embraced May tenderly.

"Poor child, you are not well. Tell me what you were thinking about. I fear you have been worried about something."

"Alice, you must think I'm a ninny, but I'll get over it now when I'm with you."

They turned out the gas and retired. Then followed a long, confidential chat. It was not long before Alice discovered that May had been worrying over her own inexplicable tears of that evening.

"Think no more about it, May. It was nothing of any consequence."

"But it must have been of consequence or you would not have cried about it, Alice. You know you are not like most girls. I never saw you shed tears before."

"They were causeless tears perhaps. I can't tell you, May. Please think no more of it." In her loyalty to her brother, and respect for the privacy which should hold family troubles sacred, this sister would not betray the brother's weakness even to a dear friend. Then if things were as she suspected, that Tom really loved May, it would only hurt the feelings of his beloved to no purpose. Alice Norwell looked with approval on Tom's attentions to May Bryce, and no word of hers should ever cause trouble between them. She little thought that in making a secret of what really might

have been divulged with propriety under the circumstances, she was laying the foundation of a suspicion that would cause her friend much anxiety.

"Don't you think you could tell me," said May, with a hesitating insistence. If she was the cause of her friend's grief, she thought it was best to know it at once. "You know I am—am I not a dear friend?"

"Oh yes," rejoined Alice hastily. "But then there are things best not to be told at all. This is a family matter." Very true. And there are people who foolishly guard with great mystery things which were much better told and done with. Little people are happy in making mysteries of little things. Some things belong to ourselves and God, some to ourselves alone, some to ourselves and our neighbors. True wisdom lies not in revealing all or keeping all secret, but in knowing what to tell and what to keep secret. What harm could result from Alice's mentioning Tom Norwell's chronic desire for stock gambling when all the world knew it or could know it if it chose? Was not May interested in it?

The conversation ended and Alice was soon in a sound sleep. But no rest came to her companion. May never was more wide awake. Alice's mysterious reference to a "family matter" tended to confirm her suspicions that the brother and sister had in some way quarreled about herself. She knew there were no very sure grounds for this surmise, but the thought had entered her head and there was no driving it out. She wished now she were in her own room, for she dared not move lest she might disturb her friend. The clock struck one, two, three. Then the people obliged to stir abroad early, began to make noises in the streets. It was utterly useless trying to go to sleep. May lay quietly and watched the first streaks of dawn steal through the chinks of the shutters. At length, not knowing how or when, she fell into a slumber and obtained an hour's sleep. She rose feverish and ill at ease. Alice remarked:

"I'm afraid you did not rest well. You must be careful of your health and sleep well, or our Prairie Flower will lose its freshness."

Tom Norwell thought over his conversation with Alice, after retiring. But his vigorous health forbade his indulging any morbid fancies or tossing restlessly. He merely concluded that he would ask May Bryce and see if she was an unsparing foe of speculation too. If his future wife was at

wide variance with him on any such important subject as this, it might be best to know it at once. In fact, Tom had not taken to Alice's advice kindly, because, though he felt in his heart she was right, he had already made a heavy venture in Wall street. His money had been kept within easy reach so he could get at it and take advantage of opportunities. When Gridiron stock approached par, Wall street was greatly surprised at the strength it showed. As Mr. Ophir was known to be the largest holder, it was evident that he was forcing the stock up. The enormous amount of improvement going on in the way of terminal facilities, and the building of new lines seemed to argue that the Gridiron was about to take its place as one of the first-class systems. In that case the stock would become permanently valuable. Norwell determined to try a deal in it. He invested over twenty thousand dollars, almost all the money he had, in Gridiron at eighty. The stock crawled upward and he could have doubled and finally trebled his money. His broker advised him to sell at par. No, Norwell argued, it was too soon to sell. The stock would go higher to stay. There was no need of hurry. He had made thousands at the very time when Alice urged him not to venture anything in stock speculation. He was right and she was wrong, he thought. He did not consequently feel disposed to take such advice kindly. Although he would not acknowledge there was anything wrong in such transactions, he would like to know what his sweetheart thought about it. She might strengthen his position by agreeing with him.

At breakfast, the ladies did not seem very lively. There was a constraint about the social atmosphere that lingered in spite of Tom's determination to be good humored. Finally it dawned upon him that things were not mending. He knew Alice was in a huff the evening before, and a bitter thought against her entered his mind, as it occurred to him that she might have told May of their petty quarrel. He thought that if she had done so, it was an unkind breach of faith with him. He forgot in his thoughtless vexation that he was concealing from his sister the very important fact of his engagement to May, which, if known, might place the situation all round in a very different light. He determined to ask May and learn the truth or falsity of his suspicions. He soon had an opportunity during the temporary absence of Alice on some domestic duties.

"You are very quiet this morning, Prairie Flower." Tom had adopted the name given her by Young Snicker, as one very appropriate and beautiful.

"I sometimes have quiet moods, Tom."

"You have them pretty quiet this morning," he said, with a laugh. But his attempt at gayety elicited only a brief smile that indicated anything but joy.

"Are you ill, May? You do not look well."

"No, I did not rest well last night."

"Tell me your troubles, little girl," said Tom, placing his arm lovingly around her waist. "There's something wrong, and it's my duty to right it if I can." It was evident that whatever the trouble might be it did not arise from any waning of her love for him. His caress, his musical voice and his kindly manner gave her a thrill of pleasure that was only too manifest.

"I am always happy with you, Tom."

"But you must not worry and lose sleep. It is all foolishness when there's nothing to worry about. There's Alice, who occasionally gets into a very dismal state. You haven't caught it from her?"

"Oh, I think not." This reply was not very hearty, and Tom suspected that he had been right after all.

"I'll bet she has been filling you with some of her dire forebodings, eh?"

"No, she hasn't."

"What did she tell you? Anything?"

"No, she refused to tell me anything," replied May, whose guileless openness was unequal to steering clear of something which she felt it might be best not to talk about. Tom was ashamed of having suspected his sister. Then after a pause, he continued:

"May, I'll tell you something that Alice and I talked over last night. Alice is opposed to my speculating in stocks. She thinks it is not right. What do you think?" May, intensely relieved to find that her own suspicions had been groundless, was happy once more, and thought of nothing but her lover.

"I don't know. What *is* speculation in stocks?"

Tom was disappointed. It was not to be expected that a majority of women should understand the mysteries of finance or the peculiar transactions of the Stock Exchange. But here was a woman, and that woman his future bride, who did not

know what speculation was. He involuntarily thought of Chetta Ingledee. Had she been asked such a question, she could have expressed an opinion at once—a decided one perhaps—and have backed it up with reasons.

"Stock speculation is—well, in fact, it is buying and selling railroad or other stocks."

"What harm is there in that more than in buying or selling anything else?"

"I claim there is none, or at least none worth speaking of. Everybody does it."

"Why do they say there is harm in it? If you pay for what you get, where can there be any harm?"

"I'll tell you. Say I buy one thousand shares of Western Union telegraph stock, and pay five cents on the dollar"—

"To bind the bargain."

"Well—yes, it's about that. If it goes up five cents I make a good deal of money, and if it goes down five cents I lose all I put in."

"But you pay as you go?"

"Yes—we have to do that."

"Then I think Alice is wrong. I don't see any harm in it. Father often buys cattle and sells them again before he drives them home."

Had it been any one else, Tom Norwell would have experienced a feeling akin to contempt for such ignorance, as he considered it. But since it was his betrothed, he must be patient. He saw the utter uselessness of continuing this subject further. This girl evidently understood nothing whatever of the principles involved in the subject under discussion. He overlooked the fact that the subject was one which she had no opportunity of understanding. He knew perfectly well, though, that if he explained fully just what speculation was, and gave in detail all the insidious and dangerous workings of this great evil which has penetrated every comer of our land, thanks to the telegraph, and which has ruined so many men and women, and brought to poverty so many families who were accustomed to plenty—he knew that if she understood all this her keen sense of right would cry out at once against this monster evil of specious guise and genteel associations. But she understood nothing of it. He was annoyed at her simplicity, and for the first time realized that she could in some things never be his companion. This particular thing was of no consequence, had he not gradually learned that the whole current of her life had been different from his.

"Tom," she said, after a pause, during which his thoughts were very busy, "may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly."

"Are you quite sure you will not be angry with me?'

"What a question!" he exclaimed, with some surprise, as those trusting blue eyes looked up to his. "How could I be angry with you? What is it, dear?" he said, as she still hesitated.

"When do you think we shall be married?"

"That is hard to answer. I must make enough money first."

"Couldn't we live on a little?"

"Not in New York."

"I can wait a long time, Tom, for you. But then I thought maybe you were trying to get too much for me. I don't care for much. Couldn't we live somewhere else on less money?"

"Yes, but my opportunities are better in New York. I am acquainted here, you see."

"I think we could be just as happy on a small income till we got better off."

"You know very little of the world, May." She was silent a moment, then she began: "I should like—that is if you don't care"—then she stopped.

"Well, go on," said Tom kindly.

"Couldn't I tell Alice at least of our engagement? It is very awkward, you know, besides, I think she expects it."

"I shouldn't tell her just yet. Alice is a little queer sometimes. She may object and make present arrangements unpleasant. Then you could not stop in New York very well. It is a great bore to have people congratulating you, too. You wouldn't like it, May, at all. The fact is, I have a deal in which I hope to make considerable money soon. Then when I am sure of it we will declare ourselves to the world and marry as soon as we like. We will surprise them. At present it is better as it is."

"Oh, I do so hope you will succeed, Tom. You know I go home to Illinois next week, so you must write me just as soon as you make your fortune. Don't wait a minute, for you know how I shall expect it."

"Mustn't I write till I make my fortune?"

"Yes, indeed, you naughty fellow, you must write every single day, or I shall be mad at you."

And tell you how all our friends are?"

"Yes."

"Gentlemen and ladies?"

"I've no doubt you could say something about all the young ladies. You city men all flirt dreadfully. But if you please, Mr. Norwell," she said, assuming a mock severity, "you are on your good behavior so far as young ladies are concerned."

"Even with Miss Snicker?"

"Yes, or Miss Ingledee. By the way, Tom, she is a very old friend of yours, isn't she?"

"Yes, an old friend of the family."

"And a pretty good one, isn't she? At least she seems to me to be."

"Why, yes, I hope so," said Tom carelessly.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RUIN, UTTER RUIN AND DISGRACE.

The movement in Gridiron stock engineered by Ophir and Ingledee had affected other securities, and there was a sharp advance all along the line. Gridiron stocks soared higher every hour. Thousands of shorts were badly nipped. The bulls were squeezing enormous sums out of the bears. Tom Norwell was jubilant. He was making thousands, almost hour by hour. His broker urged, pleaded that he should sell out. Tom was carried away by the excitement. When Gridiron reached one hundred, he thought it would go to one hundred and twenty-five. Suddenly, and without any apparent reason, there was a decline of two or three points. Again the broker said sell, but Norwell was not alarmed. Holding steady that day, Gridiron dropped heavily next day at the opening, and weakened till the close. Everybody was puzzled—that is, everybody except the old operators, who suspected the nature of the manipulation going on. The broker now had no advice to offer. Tom determined to hold on and risk the chances of recovering lost ground.

Next day stocks dropped still lower. Norwell became alarmed. He had bought at a rather high figure after the

advance began, and a few more points would wipe out his profits and endanger his investment. He became exceedingly anxious, and watched the quotations as a man struggling for life in the water watches the approach of a rescuing boat. But the inexorable figures recorded only disaster. Down, down, down went Gridiron till Tom's twenty thousand dollars were nearly wiped out. Soon the broker would demand more margins or close the deal, and with it close Tom's hopes. Norwell knew that the little money he had remaining available was scarcely a drop in this seething Niagara. He stared at the ticker like a man demented, then would rush into the street wildly, only to rush back again and look at the slowly crawling paper ribbon with the quotations. There! The margin is gone and with it twenty thousand dollars original investment and five times the sum in profits since the highest point had been reached.

In desperation and with trembling fingers Norwell drew a check for one thousand dollars, and put it up as additional margin. The confusion and excitement were indescribable. Men acted more like lunatics or wild animals in a stampede than rational human beings. It was every one to save himself, if possible, though hundreds were already bankrupt after enormous losses. Such times are as bad as battle to upset men's sober reason. They meet. They consult excitedly. They rush to a neighboring office, then rush back again, scarce knowing what they do. They delay. They resort to artifices, and strive to gain time by trickery. They shout, they swear, they gesticulate. But the inexorable fate in the person of the dreadful ticker cuts one by one their puny threads, and down they sink, to rise no more in Wall street. Only the men of uncommon coolness and nerve, backed by experience, manage to retain complete control of their senses in such a crisis. Norwell was cognizant only of a frenzied determination to hold on. Everybody felt sure that stocks would soon rally. The broker felt confident of this too. If Norwell could only hold out he might yet save himself.

If malignant spirits are allowed to roam this earth and tempt weak mortals, as many estimable people believe, ignoring man's natural fertility of evil, one must have whispered in Norwell's ear. Just around the corner, in the vaults of a bank, lay Alice's bonds,—twenty-five thousand dollars in first-class six per cent. securities of a prosperous Western city. Tom always carried the key of the vault drawer. It occurred

to him to borrow these bonds for one day only. Alice would never know it, and was he not justifiable in using her money to save his own? But he had no time to think over the matter. The ticker was busy recording another decline. In a few minutes the bonds as collateral were in the broker's hands, and Norwell, confident that he was safe, went out to lunch, feeling greatly relieved from the terrible strain under which he had been laboring.

Meeting Hickley on the street, the two went together to a quiet restaurant several blocks distant, a favorite resort of the lawyer's.

"Lively times in Wall street," said Hickley, as they walked along the quiet street which led to their destination.

"Rather lively."

"Are you in, Norwell?"

"Somewhat, yes."

"I couldn't stand the excitement of such business. It would kill me."

"Is it worse than politics, Hickley?" asked Tom, turning the tables.

"Why, of course it is, unless perhaps when a man is running for President, or something of that sort. Politics as a trade is a bad enough business."

"Yes, it is at times a pretty dirty trade."

"But no worse than stock gambling. I'm ashamed of politics myself, Norwell, and am trying to get out of it. As for the other, thank God, I value my peace of mind too much to try that. How do you stand on the deal, Norwell?"

"I was a hundred thousand ahead, but I've dropped back a little," said Norwell evasively.

"Close out and keep out. If you had come to me, I might have given you a pointer."

"What?"

"I'll not say what since you didn't come in time; but you know I am attorney for a certain railroad, and what I say must be in strict confidence. There's a nigger in the woodpile."

"Who is he, and where is he?"

"No matter who he is. I can only guess. Get out and stay out."

Before the close of business the concealed African gave the woodpile a tremendous shaking up. Out of his mere Ethiopian wantonness he sent billets flying hither and thither

like leaves before a gale. His sport was no sport for the street, and several small firms, with one or two large ones, closed their doors. With a rush Gridiron settled to its old quotations, which it had maintained for several weeks before. When the hour for closing arrived, Tom Norwell's last dollar and Alice's bonds had sunk out of sight. He and his sister were again penniless.

Norwell was so completely stunned by the disaster that he could scarcely realize what had happened. For the first time in his life he felt ill. He felt a weakness and confusion of ideas that he had never before experienced. He was incapable of thinking coherently, and lacked the courage to dwell on the consequences of the disaster that had befallen him. It must be only a dream, he said to himself. He started to walk, mechanically, not knowing or caring whither he went. Before he was aware of his direction, he found himself on the wharf at the Battery. A sudden and irresistible impulse came over him to throw himself into the water and end the losing battle of life. Then he thought of his sister, and how cruel and cowardly it would be to desert her in her poverty. He began walking again. At last, without knowing how, he found himself far up in the outskirts of Brooklyn. He had crossed the ferry and paid his fare without being conscious of the fact.

He returned to New York. He was gradually regaining control of himself, and the thought that constantly tortured him was, "How can I tell her?" Starting up town by some unknown impulse he took the Bowery instead of Broadway, and branching off to the east side, soon found himself at Pipe Malley & Co.'s store. It was now seven o'clock in the evening, and he remembered that Alice would be anxious because he had not come home to dinner. Fortunately, he recollected that May Bryce had said adieu that morning, and gone to her aunt's, intending to leave soon for Illinois. He was very glad of it. Now the wedding must be deferred a long time. His misfortune was all the harder because it involved loved ones. As for himself, he could have easily borne it.

Entering the store Norwell bought a couple of oranges, for he was very thirsty and tired, as he all at once realized. He sat down and commenced to peel an orange with desperate calmness. He picked off every little fiber of adhering rind, prolonging the operation as much as possible. He

dreaded to go home, and this trivial employment was a procrastination of the final trial which he must undergo. Pipe eyed him curiously. At length he said:

"Mr. Norwell, I'm awful glad you dropped in. I want to ask your advice, 'cos I know you kin tell me."

"What is it Malley?" asked Tom, without looking up.

"Do you know any capitalist as could negotiate an' loan a feller twenty-five dollars?"

Looking at the boy Norwell saw, what under other circumstances he would have noticed at first, that Pipe appeared ill at ease. The young man had nervously dusted the counter, and looked in the money drawer several times with no apparent object.

"Well, I don't know, Pipe," said Tom. "I suppose that means that you are asking me for a loan?"

"I reckon that's about the size of it. It's awful cheeky, I know, but you see you're more like an old friend than anybody I knows that's got money. Fact is, I'm in a fix. I've got some paper out an' I got ter raise twenty-five dollars more to meet it." Pipe spoke of having paper out with a conscious pride that his mercantile transactions had grown to such an extent that they could not be managed any longer on a cash basis. Judging from his evident anxiety, however, he would gladly have exchanged the doubtful honor of having paper out for the paper itself. "You see if I don't meet it them bank roosters won't wait a minnit. They'll put it into a potest, an' then my credit's gone up higher'n a kite."

"I see," said Tom reflectively, as he began peeling a second orange.

"I kin git it from mother. She has mor'n that tied up in a flannen rag, but I ain't the kind to go spongin' on my mother 'nless I have to. If I can't raise it—but there's no use talkin' that way, I've *got to raise it*—wy I 'spose I'll have to call on her fur it." Tom took out his pocketbook. There was some two hundred dollars in it, which he had forgotten in the excitement of the day, or that too would have gone.

"Here is twenty-five dollars, Pipe. I should be sorry to see you in trouble. Pay me when you can."

"Thank'ee, Mr. Norwell. I'll write a note."

"That's all right, Malley, I want no note. What is this debt for, Pipe?"

"Well you see, I bought a stock of goods part cash, an' give a note fur the balance. Biz was good an' chink come in

like dirt. It looked so plenty that I put twenty-five into stocks, an' the tumble jist about knocked that out first round. The broker says I ought to have twenty-five more to-morrer, or the whole thing's gone up. I can't raise it an' pay the note too."

"Pipe Malley, take my advice. Let that deal go and never take another. Keep the twenty-five dollars to pay your note."

"Wot! an lose wot's in?"

"Yes, you will probably lose it any way.

"But the broker says he thinks—"

"Pay no attention to the broker. Keep clear of him in future." Something in Norwell's manner aroused Pipe's suspicions.

"Mr. Norwell, was you in too?"

"Yes, and got nipped too. I tell you this hoping it will influence you to keep out."

"I'm awful sorry. Was you nipped bad?"

"Pretty badly."

"Awful bad?"

"Yes bad enough, I can tell you."

"It's a ding rotted shame the way them Wall street chaps cheats honest fellers like us. Say, Mr. Norwell, if you got nipped, mebbe you need this money?"

"No, Pipe, not if it will save you from the sheriff; keep it."

"But, if I let that deal flicker, I don't need it. I kin squeeze through on the note. Take back yer money, Mister Norwell. I wouldn't take it from you fur anything in the world under them circumstances."

"Just as you say, Malley."

"I'd a heap ruther you would."

Norwell pocketed the money, and commenced his journey homeward, the saddest of his life. Mr. Pipe Malley went home that evening in no very amiable mood. As Pipe, Mrs. Malley, and Quill were gathered round the breakfast table next morning, it was evident that sleep had not fully restored serenity to the head of the house, Pipe having, by general consent, gradually risen to that responsible dignity. After an interval of silence, during which Pipe had been laboring assiduously with a large slice of ham and two eggs turned, that young gentleman renewed the conversation:

"We can't stand no sich extravagance as this, mother.

Look at this ere lay out," and he laid down his knife and fork to survey the table. "Ham, an' eggs, an' butter, an' cream, an' sugar, all to wunst. We're livin' too high."

Mrs. Malley, who was pouring out her third cup of coffee, set down the coffee pot in amazement. Quill, who was just in the act of sticking his fork into a third fried egg, received such a start that he almost dropped the egg on the tablecloth. He managed, however, to land it dexterously on his plate, when he paid no futher attention to the egg, but made a furious onslaught on the "heel" of a loaf, which portion ordinarily his epicurean taste was inclined to reject. It might be sound policy to eat crust this morning as a ruse to divert Pipe's attention from the riotous luxury surrounding him.

"Dear me suz, Pipey. I don't see any high livin'. I've always had plenty, an' I'm always goin' to have it while I'm able to work."

"But I tell ye, mother, high livin' costs like fun, an' besides, it ain't healthy. The doctors all say so."

"Lord help me boy, where do you see any high livin'? Just name the article, won't ye?"

"Well, there's Quill jist gittin' away with the third egg." That gentleman's little stratagem with the crust had proved a miserable failure. He had wrenched his jaw all to no purpose. He muttered something about "likin' a negg as well as anybody."

"Bettern' anybody," growled Pipe.

"Now, Pipe, you're in a bad humor this mornin'. You'd better swaller your breakfast an' light right out to yer work, an' you'll feel better by noon. If Quill wants three eggs he's goin' to have 'em as long as I'm able to cook 'em, mind that now."

"I tell ye three eggs ain't healthy. Any doctor will tell ye that."

"Bad luck to the doctors. I ain't livin' for doctors. When your poor faythe was took what did the doctors do? Nothin' but send in their bill. Faith boy, is it starvin' us you are goin' to try?"

"Yer not goin' to starve, mother; yer sweetenin' the third cup o' coffee now. Two cups is enough fur anybody. Coffee perduces effects in the stummick, an' most likely in the lights too."

"Pipe, I think yer clean gone out o' yer senses. Yer talkin' like a crazy man. Do you think I'd do without me

coffee? It never hurt my lights. An' if it did, I'm not savin' me lights to will to somebody. I'm a usin' 'em myself. I'll not care for 'em when the rest of me's done, I guess. But yer jawin' like an old man with the rheumatiz. What's the matter with ye this mornin'?"

"I can't stand sich extravagance. Cos I'm in business I hain't a millionaire yet. I've got some paper to meet."

"Wrappin' paper is it? Sure me boy, Ill lend ye some o' me laundry paper."

"Wrappin' paper!" said Pipe, exhibiting mingled pity and disgust. "Mother, it ain't much use to tell you or Quill anything about business. But then of course you never was in business, an' hain't expected to know wot paper is. Paper is notes. I got a note to meet to-day."

"To meet, did you say?"

"Yes, to pay."

"Notes is a bad business, Pipey. How much is the note?"

"Twenty-five dollars." Pipe named the amount of this enormous obligation with a stress that seemed to swell the sum total to twenty-five thousand.

"Ah, Pipe, it's a bad day when you make debts. How did you ever get into debt head over heels like that? Take warnin' by yer fayther. Five hundred dollars doesn't grow on bushes. Yer fayther throwed money round like he owned a mint. It went into whiskey in the wholesale licker trade, though I think a deal of the stuff went retail, an' then by bad debts an' by hook an' crook he failed intirely and left us all without a cent. Misfortune sent yer poor fayther to the graveyard. Pipe, how *did* ye ever do it? How *could* ye get into debt like that?"

"I tell yer it takes capital to carry on a business. Now it's done, an' that's the main thing."

"Pipe, don't worry any more. I've three times the sum all in clean gold. I'll loan you twenty-five."

"No, mother, I can squeeze along without it somehow. I won't borrow money. It hain't safe to do business on borrered capital. I can't pay Quill's salary for two weeks, mebbe, an' I guess, Quill, you'll have to pack that 'ere last consignment of oranges up from the wholesaler's. They'll be invoisted to us to-day. So git yer hat, we must be stirrin'."

With this Pipe went into the front room looking for something. The last fried egg was lying on the plate. Quill had furtively cast longing eyes on it for some time. Mrs.

Malley, with a mother's instinct, read his wishes in his face. Scarcely had Pipe turned his back before she took up the dish and a knife and giving the egg a dexterous turn, landed it on his plate. At two bites it had disappeared, but being fried rather hard the egg refused to go down readily. This was an emergency. Pipe was waiting and they must go to the store. But Quill's long experience in such exigencies brought him through triumphantly, as it had done many times before. A great gulp of cold coffee did the business, and hastily wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, Quill joined Pipe outside.

On that eventful evening, Tom Norwell reached home about eight o'clock. His sister, who had been surprised at his not appearing in time for their dinner at six, finally concluded that he had been detained on business. Meeting him at the door, she inquired:

"What delayed you, Tom? I expected you at dinner."

"I think I did not start as early as usual, Alice," he replied in a husky voice. He took off his hat, and instead of hanging it on the rack, stood holding it in his hand. She saw at once there was something the matter. He could not face her and conceal the agony he was suffering. "Brother, what is the matter? You are ill?" She took his hat and hung it on the rack. Then he followed her mechanically into the small parlor. As the full light of the gas fell on his face she could see that he was suffering keenly. A few hours had drawn deep lines on his brows and around the mouth. A stranger would scarcely have recognized his haggard countenance.

"Tom, you are ill," she said anxiously. "What is it?"

"I think I have over-exerted myself to-day."

He dared not look her in the face as he told this poor miserable lie, the first of his life. He felt that his dreadful confession must be made then and there, but every moment of respite was sweet. He would willingly, yes gladly, have died to make reparation to this sister, who was so dear to him.

"I'll get you some sponge cake and wine."

"Oh, no," he said, in a tone which to her ear was full of anguish. "I couldn't eat anything—I think—I am not well."

"Tom, what is it?" she said, drawing close to him and placing her hand on his shoulder. Then, as she remembered that there had been a flurry in Wall street, she asked:

"Is it stocks?"

"Yes," answered Tom, with a moan.

"I've feared this for a long time." Then, in a gentler tone, she asked:

"Is it bad?"

"Everything."

"Poor boy, certainly something is left."

"Nothing. I put in every dollar. I'm a beggar." Still he dared not tell her all.

"Well, Tom, I am just as sorry as you are. It isn't much comfort now to talk about looking at the bright side of things. But then we haven't lost everything, and you shall share mine. We can both get along on that till you find something to do."

"Oh, sister, don't talk of sharing," he groaned. There was a pause, and she replied in a confused way, dimly realizing the import of his remark:

"Tom, I don't understand you."

"There's nothing to share, sister. I'm a base villain; I've robbed you. Dear sister, you are a beggar, and I'm the cause of it." His tone was piteous. He was not deprecating her just anger like a coward, but only giving way to the pent-up feelings of contrition that welled in his heart. After a moment's pause, during which he awaited his sentence, she began in a tone of hot indignation:

"And you have done this; you, my own brother. I told you it would come to this, but you laughed at my fears and my tears. I told you it made men paupers, and what is worse, rogues, liars, and thieves—yes thieves," she added, in a hard tone.

"I am to blame. I have robbed you," was his only answer.

"And I warned you, too."

"I know you did. You need not spare me. I don't deserve it."

"To think it should come to this, that men will steal bread from their wives and children and sisters. God certainly will curse such doings."

"Alice, I did wrong. I deserve no longer your respect, but the word thief is a hard one."

"What's the use of mincing words?"

"There's none. Let it stand. Some day you may be sorry for saying it. If God gives me life and strength, I

will pay you every cent. I shall never forget that you were once my sister." He turned to leave the room. She tried to stop him.

"Oh, Tom, dear brother, don't go away like that. I was angry, and spoke too hastily. Come back." He never seemed to hear her at all, but taking his hat, walked slowly into the street.

"I was too hasty. He was sorely tempted. I ought to have carried the key of the vault drawer myself. Oh, the miserable money! I have lost my brother, my only dear one. Money always brings us a curse." She sank into a chair and wept tears of bitter sorrow.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

Next morning at breakfast they sat for a long time in silence. At length Alice said:

"Tom, I wouldn't worry about the money. We are both young and strong. We can easily get along."

"I care nothing for myself, Alice. It's only for you."

"Let us forget all that. Forgive me for saying what I did last night. I was hasty. Won't you forgive me?" she repeated, as he made no answer.

"I think you were very hard on me Alice, even if I had done you a great wrong. I will keep my word and repay you every cent."

"Let us not talk of the money, Tom, only say you forgive me."

"Yes, Alice, I forgive you, though it is I who should beg forgiveness. We'll say no more about it."

But in spite of his words, which were fair, Alice felt that an estrangement had begun between her and her brother. He fully realized the wrong he had done, but her sharp words had cut like a knife and wounded his pride. He could never meet his sister again on equal terms till he repaid her what he had lost of hers.

The Norwells were again very poor. They made arrangements to give up their comfortable apartments, and

board in a cheap locality where living was less expensive. Alice resolved that she would now continue her studies in short-hand and prepare to make her own living. When Chetta Ingledee heard of their ill-luck she was in deep distress. She regretted that she had not gone directly to Tom and warned him of danger. Obedience to parents is a sacred duty and the ties of kindred enjoin the patriotism of blood, which is next to the love of country. But there are times when loyalty, even to parents, may be a crime instead of a virtue. This was such an occasion. As Chetta thought that a call upon Alice would, at the present time, probably be received in rather bad grace she determined to reach Tom more directly. So she invited him to call, ostensibly with reference to the arrangements for a social affair she had in hand.

Tom came and passed an hour or so very pleasantly. Chetta was very kind. Finally, she alluded to the late financial crisis and remarked that she had heard that some of her friends were caught on the wrong side of the market.

"Yes," he said, with as cheerful an air as he could assume. "Some of us did get slightly worsted."

"Were your losses heavy, Mr. Norwell?"

"Much heavier than I can afford," he replied, making no attempt at concealment from one whom he felt was after all perhaps the most sympathetic and appreciative friend he had in the world.

"I'm very sorry. Such things are not right."

"I blame no one, Miss Ingledee. I was unfortunate, that was all."

As best she could, on this delicate subject, Chetta poured the balm of sympathy on his disappointed feelings. There was no effusive bubbling of hyperbolic adjectives. He felt that her sorrow for his misfortune was real. Then with it came, all of a sudden, the revelation to his soul that this woman could understand his nature and sympathize with it as no other could. With it came the warning that he was scarcely loyal to May Bryce, even in harboring such a thought, and that it was not best for him to meet Miss Ingledee often.

Before he left, Chetta inquired about Alice and her friend May Bryce, and why they had not called upon her. Tom was scarcely prepared to explain satisfactorily why they had failed to call, and was slightly embarrassed by the question. In truth, he had never encouraged his sister to take May to call on Chetta Ingledee. He did not care to have these

women meet at all. No good could come of their knowing each other, and there was imminent danger that each might misconstrue his friendliness with the other. Chetta saw that her various attempts to obtain information indirectly, concerning May Bryce, were not very successful. She persisted however, until Tom told her that his sister's guest was the daughter of an Illinois farmer, and had been visiting an aunt in the East. She was a great friend of Alice's, though, he added parenthetically, he believed that girls always had to have a very, very intimate, dear right-hand friend of their own sex some time or other, usually in fact, a succession of them.

With this explanation Chetta was obliged for the present to be content, though by no means satisfied. She could not forget her brother's surmise about that "other girl," and she still had a suspicion that May was the person in question. Again at times she thought that her suspicions did Tom Norwell an injustice, for he was always very agreeable, and gave no sign whatever of being offended with her. He merely kept away without appearing to try to avoid her. Perhaps, she reasoned, if he were in some settled occupation and prosperous again, he would once more be the jolly, good-natured Tom Norwell he had once been, and better still, her lover. She would aid him by her influence, as she had done before.

When Chetta Ingledee once formed a conception of what was the best thing to be done, she did not allow the idea to perish of inanity, while she speculated indecisively as to whether she would really attempt it. With her action followed thought as surely, and as much a consequence, as fatigue follows exercise. The next morning at breakfast the father and daughter were alone, Silas not yet having appeared.

"Papa, I wish you could retire from business. Have you not enough already?"

"Why to be sure, daughter, so far as money goes, I had enough long ago. I make money now because the habit grows on me. I love the activity which has led me on to fortune. And then each additional million means so much more influence, so much power, so many triumphs over my rivals."

"Papa, do you think you always use this power aright? Power may be a very dangerous thing in the wrong hands."

"My child, you don't understand the intricate, occult influences which permeate great financial operations. All changes in the commercial, religious or political condition of

a nation take place according to fixed natural laws. It is one of nature's laws that there must be very rich men."

"I think that is man's law rather than God's."

"Now you are talking nonsense, my daughter. You must not decide such questions from accidental circumstances and superficial observation."

"I do not pretend to understand all about these things, but I do understand one thing, and that is that good men suffer by these money disturbances. Look at Mr. Norwell for instance. And now his son has lost everything."

"I am sorry for Thomas Norwell. I told him if he ever wanted to deal to come to me and I would give him assistance, but you see he chose to depend on his own judgment, and in consequence lost. I'm afraid Norwell is not doing the best lately." As Mr. Ingledee said this he quickly scanned his daughter's face, but she betrayed no sign of unusual interest, much less surprise.

"What do you mean, papa?"

"Well, he is growing reckless. I hear he gambles too."

"Papa, I do not believe a word of that."

"I have it from good authority."

"Did Silas tell you?"

"No, Chetta, I could scarcely get such information from Silas."

"Then I don't believe it."

"I scarcely think myself he has followed it far, but a beginning is dangerous."

Mr. Ingledee said this utterly unconscious of the direct application of the principle to the methods by which his own fortune had been acquired. In his mind no relation whatever existed between making a fictitious sale and thereby wagering a heavy sum, and betting on cards. He would have denied the relation indignantly, had any one pointed it out. The verbal distinction existing between the words *business* and *gambling* had for him all the force of a moral one. Thousands of men besides railway kings, are unable or unwilling to see that rechristening an evil and stamping it with public approval, does not make it right.

"Papa, don't you think we could help Mr. Norwell some way?"

"How do you mean?"

"Perhaps there is some position on some of your lines?"

"Nothing that he would care for; besides, he would have

to go to the Pacific coast in all probability, which most likely he would not like to do. Ophir's interests and connections with Eastern roads might help him."

"Would you speak to Mr. Ophir?" As Chetta said this, she thought of that interview in Ingledee's private office. She knew he could if he would.

"I have already asked one great favor of Ophir in connection with this young man. I scarcely like the idea of becoming his intercessor a second time. Besides, Norwell might not thank me for it."

"You might at least give him the chance."

"Chetta, do you really wish this?"

"I do."

"Is there anything you have not told me? Is Tom Norwell anything more than a friend to you?"

"He is not," replied Chetta, coloring slightly.

"Do you expect him to be?"

"Papa, I think even you have scarcely the right to ask me this question under the circumstances. Tom Norwell has always been our friend, as you know. What he may think of our family I have no means of knowing. No one would misunderstand you, I think, in this matter."

It was arranged after considerable persuasion on her part that Ingledee should use his influence with Ophir to obtain Norwell a situation with one of the great railway lines. Hickley was to be asked to inform Tom, so that the latter might never know just how he came by the offer. He would not accept anything that came directly from Ophir in any shape. Chetta was happy. She knew the full extent of her father's influence just then with Ophir.

Meantime the Norwells were to experience once more a hard, disagreeable fact, a fact hoary with antiquity, that nothing so tries friendship as a change of fortune. A severe financial reverse will separate true friends from the chaff of hollow friendship as certainly as the magnet selects iron filings from a heap of litter, leaving the fluff and dust. Prosperity warms at the hearth of friendship, while poverty freezes in the entry. I said true friends, but after all, may not a friend as honestly admire your fine house as yourself? He is a true friend after his kind. Around the Snicker family altar—I do not mean the altar which a sentimental tradition still tacitly ascribes to the belongings of every well-regulated household, but, which in the Snicker family usually stood silent and de-

serted because it was so dreadfully common,—it was the new altar, the altar of Mammon, whence a cloud of incense sweet with tons and tons of sugar, perpetually rose, as the Snicker high priest, clad in the broadest of phylacteries, proudly swung his golden censer—at this family altar the Norwells were discussed and done for in a very brief space.

"Norwell's busted again, Matilda," said the Old Commoner sententiously to his thin, negative consort.

"Overtrading, I suppose?"

"Overtrading!" he replied, with a spice of contempt for her ignorance. "No; foolhardy speculation. He's not in business at all."

"I did not know that, Amaziah." With this active participation in the conversation, Mrs. Snicker relapsed into her normal vacuum.

"Say, Pa," queried Fred Snicker, with a languishing drawl, "when you went into molasses, and that sort of thing, you know, was that speculation, or was it—what the deuce was it now?"

"I've told you that, about fifty times, Fred," growled Mr. Snicker.

"Yes, I know Pa, but then really now, never having been in business, and knowing nothing about sugar and such things, one is not to be expected to remember those disagreeable details."

"Well, I was in business, and I bought a legitimate article, not exactly on speculation, but simply made very heavy purchases—of a legitimate article, mind you—if sugar an' molasses isn't legitimate what is, I'd like to know." Mr. Snicker raised his voice a trifle as if he expected some one would attempt to controvert so daring an assertion. No one did so, and the legitimacy of sugar was established. He went on: "Sugar bein' a legitimate article, it was bound to go up when the war began and cut off the supply. Anybody could see that—I mean anybody, with a head long enough. It takes no common head to ingineer such a deal. Norwell has no head for speculation. His forte is—well, I think his forte is to keep clear of it."

"Hadn't I better mark them off my list when I have my birthday party, Ma?" said Harrie.

"As you think best, child. Pa, what do you say?"

"What do I say? What do I know about such things? If you don't want 'em cross 'em off, that's all."

"Tom isn't a bad sort of pwerson," drawled Fred. "Sometimes he is a little abwupt, but I like to see a man of spirit. I told him last time that he was abwupt that really a fellow couldn't be expected to stand that sort of thing always. When he saw I was in earnest he apologized handsomely, and said he was very sorry to offend a friend. Really, I haven't anything against Tom Norwell."

"Fred, I think you shouldn't get into so many rows with the fellows."

"I think, Harrie, I can take care of myself," he said, exhibiting a little of the sanguinary disposition which might be expected to crop out, were he sufficiently provoked.

"I never could see why Alice Norwell goes to parties," continued Harrie. "She doesn't like dancing. She only tastes the supper, and she pretends to be dreadfully down on flirting. It's my opinion she's down on it because young men don't take to her. I think I'll cut them, Pa. You see they haven't the means now to give parties. I don't think they've the right to go to parties."

"No right under heaven! We should pay as we go. I think I should drop them. That's a good enough reason."

Mr. Snicker regarded social obligations, as he did all others, from a monetary standpoint. He worshiped at a very fashionable church because there the Snicker family could hear the gospel, amid surroundings commensurate with the size of the Snicker bank account. He gave to charity because as an abstract principle charity must be right, since everybody admitted it, and because other rich people had set the fashion of giving to charity. Hence, their giving implied an obligation of Snicker's to give, and he did give, to his credit, be it said, with no mean hand. But he never gave, concealing from the left hand what the right hand did. With him charity and publicity went together. Had Tom Norwell just returned from Sing Sing and been about to give a swell party in commemoration of his release, it would doubtless have been the proper thing for the Snickers to accept his invitation, that is judging from the family's idea of the purposes and proprieties of society. It would have been right because the Snickers had the means to repay such obligations in kind with a reasonable prospect of adding interest thereto. Mr. Snicker might perhaps have been a little startled by any such concrete application of his principles, but there is where his logic must land him eventually. So the inexorable pencil of high so-

ciety's stern auditing clerks was drawn pitilessly through the names of Tom and Alice Norwell on many a list.

But they still had friends, and good ones, too, though some of them were neither rich nor famous. Mary Hackett called on Alice to tell her that the firm for which she worked wanted an intelligent lady to manage their correspondence. Mrs. Malley called, with a little remembrance from Pipe Malley & Co., in the shape of a basket of fruit in which were a half dozen superb oranges, a half dozen long golden bananas, several very large red-cheeked apples, and some luscious grapes. Under the pink netting was slipped a large card printed in very black letters, "Pipe Malley & Co., dealers in fine foreign and domestic fruits." Above this in rather laborious, but very plain letters, was written, "Compliments of" in Pipe's own hand.

"The boys," said Mrs. Malley, "have sent you and your brother a little fruit, if ye'll pardon the liberty, Miss Norwell. Pipe and yer brother are acquainted like, I believe."

"Thank you. Are you Mrs. Malley?"

"That's me name. The twins is me boys. I was comin' this way and thought I'd bring it meself."

"Come in, Mrs. Malley," said Alice kindly. "Will you take off your bonnet and sit down?"

"I've hardly the time, Ma'am," said Mrs. Malley, who seated herself nevertheless. "Pipe thought you'd like a bit o' fruit, may be."

"It was very kind of them. What fine fruit it is."

"They keeps only the best. Pipe says he's goin' to work up a reputation for havin' only the best."

"Mrs. Malley, please say that my brother and I thank your sons very much for this present."

"It's not worth mentionin', Miss, at all. Pipe said your brother had lost some money lately."

"Yes, he did meet with losses."

"And I'm one that knows how to sympathize with you, Miss, for Mr. Malley went to the grave fur grief." Alice Norwell scarcely understood why the late Mr. Malley went to the grave for an article which may be found almost anywhere this side of it. She waited for Mrs. Malley to finish. "Poor man, after slavin' for years, him an' me scraped together a start in the world an' lost it all."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, he went into business, and he wasn't hardly fit for it, I think."

"What business did he go into?"

"Wholesale licker. That man throwed five hundred dollars right into whiskey and lost every red cent of it."

"What a pity. But business is uncertain."

"It is in truth, Ma'am. Some say Mr. Malley couldn't keep things agoin'. They went from bad till worse, an' the sheriff shut up the store. It broke his heart, too,"—here Mrs. Malley alluded to her late husband, not to the obdurate minion of the law—"an' I follered him to the grave."

"We must expect trouble in this world."

"Ye're wrong there, Miss. There's no use expectin' it. It'll come soon enough without. If Mr. Malley had only kept out o' whiskey it would have been all right."

Mrs. Malley omitted to say that when her late husband went into the business of liquor merchant he became his own regular customer, and seemed gradually to become possessed with the idea that the best thing to do was to drink up all his stock himself. He carried out this ambitious project with unflagging zeal, aided by a few of those zealous friends who are never known to desert a man in such an emergency. They had well-nigh accomplished this thirsty undertaking when the business suddenly went to the dogs, and Mr. Malley retired to the graveyard for grief, leaving a widow to struggle with life, encumbered by a pair of twins, and possessed of only good health and willing hands. After some further expressions of sympathy, Mrs. Malley took her departure.

Tom Norwell was now beginning to recover from the dark despair into which he had been plunged by his great reverse of fortune. His health and elastic spirits inspired him with hope that somehow all would yet be well. He thought of going West, where there were better opportunities for young men. Chicago, he had heard, presented good openings in different directions. Alice approved of the plan. She wished to get away from her old associates, and start among strangers anew. One day Tom received a note from Hickley, asking him to call at the office on business of interest.

Tom went that forenoon. Hickley asked him if a situation on salary would be acceptable, and informed him that a very good place might, perhaps, be obtained in the passenger service of a certain great railroad.

"I don't understand the business," said Norwell.

"That isn't necessary. The clerks in the office can run it till you get your hand in."

"Hickley, that road is controlled by Ophir. I don't like to accept any favors from that man. I scarcely understand why this place is offered to me at all."

"Mr. Ophir, of course, owns a very large interest in the road, and is a director, but then you have other acquaintances on the board. There's Bulger, he's an old friend of your father. Why shouldn't you be offered the place?"

"I don't like the idea of taking a thing by way of charity, especially from Ophir."

"Five thousand a year isn't bad."

"The salary is all right, but the fact is, Hickley, I can't accept. I've made other arrangements."

"Oh, that alters the case, Norwell. Why didn't you say so at first?"

"I don't mean anything definite. I am going West."

"Tom Norwell, we have always been good friends, and in the habit of speaking plainly. Now, if you will allow me to say so, I think you are playing the fool."

"You have a right to your own opinion, Hickley, and I have a right to reject this offer if I choose. I thank you for what you have done for me. I am sorry I cannot accept."

A few days after this conversation between Norwell and Hickley, Tom and Alice sat in their little parlor discussing their plans for the future. As they intended to leave the city soon it was thought best not to give up their apartments as contemplated until they were ready to start for Chicago. The brother and sister were apparently on good terms, though Alice could not fail to observe that the old spontaneous affection of her brother was not the same. He was just as kind as formerly, and even more thoughtful of her. All his plans now seemed to be made for her benefit, and through them all she could discern that duty was before the tender, brotherly affection that once was hers. She was secretly pained at this, but there was now no means of recalling those hasty words. Time, she thought, might remove their sting. Herself she repented them with bitter tears, but any allusion to the matter now could only make things worse instead of better by bringing the whole painful scene fresh before him.

Tom had been reading to her portions of a letter from Wilson. The Amazon had proved a bonanza. Wilson and Mack were both millionaires, or would be in a few more months. A branch of the great "Cobweb" line of rail-

road would soon be completed to Ruby Buttes. Then mine owners would be able to work their mines at a vastly increased profit, the present cost of transportation by wagon being ruinously high. Alice had already received all this news direct from Wilson, but she was pleased to hear it again. Wilson had offered to loan Tom any amount of money he might need in his present exigencies. But Tom bravely concluded not to allow others to make easy the thorny path which he had chosen for himself. Concealing from Wilson the true state of his finances, he replied that he should work up from the bottom, and thus have the more satisfaction when he reached the top.

During the evening Garmand dropped in. He had suddenly determined to return to Europe, and had come to say good-bye. The good news from Wilson made Alice look unusually happy. From the first she had admired him. His superior intelligence and practical common sense combined with an unassuming manner, pleased her greatly. Now she had the best of reasons for thinking that he cared for her. To win the love of such a man, especially in his hour of success, seemed to her a woman's greatest triumph.

Garmand had greatly admired this practical Yankee girl. She was always entertaining, sometimes a trifle precise, and never silly. She corrected his mistakes so kindly and with such adroit indirectness, that it seemed many times as if she were seeking information instead of imparting it. She never quizzed him as some of the young ladies did slyly at times. He perceived that she was well educated, well bred, and, in short, a lady in every sense of the term. He thought she could manage an English home admirably. And yet he had never made love to her. In the first place, his mind was not made up that he cared for her. It is a momentous matter for an Englishman of the upper class to marry. He must please himself, he must please his relations, and above all, he must please a caste as scrupulous in social matters as were the Pharisees of old in religious. Had he been a marquis he might have ignored these caste considerations, but a man well down toward the substratum of the structure could not afford to make a mistake. Then, considering how hard it is for a man to please himself in the choice of a wife, the task seems well nigh hopeless when he is obliged to please pretty much all the world besides. Moreover, this girl had lost her money, which was not to be overlooked very easily. Could he make

the sacrifice? He had received very little encouragement. After a considerable acquaintance, Miss Norwell seemed just the same as at the beginning, a little more communicative perhaps, because they had a wider range of common interest, but there was not the slightest approach toward a more friendly footing. He thought perhaps this was his own fault.

Garmand revolved the situation in his mind while the trio sat chatting, just as he had revolved it several times before. Now he was going away and still there was nothing definitely understood. On the whole it was not best to be in a hurry; he could return to America at any time if he thought best. Norwell and Garmand started out for a little stroll where they could talk more freely. They dropped into the lobby of a hotel and sat smoking and talking over their financial reverses. This was a sore subject for both, though Garmand could afford his losses well enough. Finally Tom remarked:

"Garmand, I shouldn't mind the money so much. Hang the money, let it go. I'll get more sometime. But I have lost a sister too."

The Englishman was startled. This remark hit directly upon the subject in his own mind. Then Garmand at once suspected that his conduct had led Norwell to conclude that he expected to marry Alice. What else could it mean, this losing a sister when there were no other beaux visible? In his first alarm he did not know what reply to make, but at once thought it best to say nothing definite.

"You may be mistaken, Mr. Norwell."

"Not at all. There is no chance for a mistake in a matter like this."

"Still, is it not possible that things may be different from what you think?"

"I am not mistaken. We talked it over and there's an end of it." This matter had worried Tom a great deal secretly. Busy with his own self-accusing thoughts on the subject, it never occurred to him that Garmand might not understand at all what he alluded to. He assumed, because it filled his own thoughts, that it ought to be patent to everybody that these financial troubles had caused a rupture between brother and sister. He never thought of the fact that Garmand knew nothing about the loss of Alice's legacy. On the other hand, Garmand had been so startled by this echo of his own

reflections that it never occurred to him that Norwell could refer to anything else than what was in his friend's mind. He was alarmed at Norwell's remark that it had been talked over. The Englishman was instantly on the defensive. His conscience accused him of having been very friendly with Miss Norwell. He knew how scheming women entrapped wealthy men in his own country. Miss Snicker's rather transparent efforts rose before him at once, and he reflected that perhaps this country was no better in that direction. He failed utterly to understand this country. Had he after all been trapped, he asked himself, by one of these Yankees whose customs and peculiarities were a constant source of perplexity to his English understanding?

"Don't you think—now really you cawn't always tell—perhaps the other party meant nothing, you know."

"Some things when said and done can never be undone. This is such a case." As Norwell said this he sank listlessly behind a cloud of smoke.

Garmand was now thoroughly frightened. This allusion must be to legal proceedings for breach of promise, provided the gentleman in the case proved unwilling or tardy. He thought with terror of two or three little notes of invitation to the theater which he had written to Alice. He would give a hundred pounds apiece for them. If such a goodly sum could be made out of Pickwick's celebrated epistle, which concealed love under a cunning guise of "chops and tomato sauce," what might not be made out of his own terribly compromising conduct. It was lucky he had taken passage in the steamer which sailed to-morrow, and still more lucky he had not divulged his intentions of leaving for Europe. He would acquiesce for the present in Norwell's views, and thus avoid arousing any suspicion of his intentions. He would temporize.

"If I were advising, Norwell, I really think I should let things take their course; perhaps—well—you cawn't always tell how a thing is coming out."

"Yes, that's the only thing to be done. But my sister is very firm in her notions, and seldom says a thing hastily. That's just where the trouble comes in."

Garmand was now completely mystified. Then perhaps the brother was not in the plot, or had not the heart to carry it out. It was this sharp Yankee woman who was bent on having an English husband, or a good round money equiva-

lent (which would have to be very large, considering what precious goods it balanced). Norwell had sat during his conversation lazily puffing a cigar and looking out at the people passing. He had not noticed the face of his companion or he might have observed that there was a queer expression in it.

At length Garmand rose and remarked that it was getting late, though it was still early. He shook Norwell's hand for a longer period than usual, bidding him good-night a second and third time as he lingered; finally asking to be remembered to Miss Norwell, he took leave of his friend. He felt like a guilty culprit in stealing away from these people who had been so kind to him, without saying adieus or inviting them to share his hospitality, should they ever visit his own country. On Norwell's return Alice asked:

"Where is Mr. Garmand?"

"He went off in considerable of a hurry, I thought."

"I expected him back here to say good-night."

Next morning they were greatly surprised to see in the paper that Wyndleigh Garmand was a passenger on the Cunard steamer for Europe.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ALL THINGS ARE EASY BECAUSE ALL THINGS ARE UNTRIED.—SOME EXAMPLES OF YANKEE THRIFT.

Arriving in Chicago, the Norwells found a respectable boarding house on the West side near Union Park. The price was reasonable, their rooms comfortable, and they congratulated themselves on being so soon settled. They had letters to a few good people, and, for this reason, felt that they were not entirely among strangers. The next important thing was to find something to do. Their money was nearly exhausted, and both must go to work, and that soon. Alice was unusually fortunate in this respect. One of the persons to whom she had a letter of introduction happened to know of an opportunity for a young lady to teach as assistant in a Young Ladies' Day School. She immediately called on the Lady Principal of the school, and introduced Alice to her. Although she had no experience in teaching, Alice's fine education and ladylike manners strongly impressed the Principal.

"Would she begin on trial?" The salary was eighteen dollars per week, but that amount would not be paid to a beginner. It was finally arranged that Alice should take the place on trial at twelve dollars per week, with a promise of an advance if satisfaction was rendered. As Alice's board and lodging would cost only six dollars and a half per week including everything but washing, here was a small margin left to begin on. She considered herself in great luck, for she was to begin next Monday.

Tom found things much harder. None of the business men to whom he had letters were able to do anything for him just then. They would make a memorandum of his case and let him know if anything turned up. He knew what that meant—in nine cases out of ten, nothing at all. Then he watched the papers and began the discouraging work of answering advertisements for "help wanted." He found it the most disheartening occupation he had ever engaged in. Day after day he tramped the streets to all sorts of places, looking for any kind of decent, paying work. He met with nothing but disappointment. He found that most of the persons advertising wanted youths or young men to do from ten to twelve hours' work per day at from five to eight dollars per week. One or two firms wanted bookkeepers or salesmen at good salaries, but they had from one hundred to three hundred applicants, and wanted only experienced men. Norwell read no end of "Business Chances" in the columns of the daily papers. His experience of city life enabled him to guess what most of those were without investigation. One seductively-worded advertisement which appeared again and again, in substantially the same form, with two or three different addresses, read something as follows:

> WANTED.—A partner in an established, genteel, profitable office business paying $200 per month clear profits. Can easily be made to pay double the amount. Satisfactory reasons for selling. Two hundred dollars cash takes a half interest. Call at Room 40, 162 Hennepin street.

As it is rather unusual for an established paying business to sell out at the price of two months' profits, Tom thought he would investigate the business. Calling at Room 40, 162 Hennepin street, he found a large, bare-looking office with three desks in it, two inside a low railing, which divided the office into two parts, and one outside. A sign painted on the

glass door bore the legend, "Uriah Frisky & Co., Novelty Dealers." A young lady sat at one of the desks inside the railing inserting circulars into envelopes. At the other desk sat a young man about thirty years of age, with shiny, short hair, and a hang-dog expression, apparently very busy, too busy in fact to look up, but engaged at nothing in particular so far as a casual observer could judge. Norwell was met at the railing by the young lady, who, taking the little slip he had cut from the morning paper, said:

"Oh, that refers to the 'Employment Bureau.' Mr. Duemup, the manager, is not in just now," and she glanced at the desk outside the railing, thereby indicating the place where Mr. Duemup presided when the pressure of his genteel profitable business required his presence in the office.

"When do you think he will be in?"

"About eleven o'clock; call at that hour." At eleven o'clock sharp Tom Norwell was on hand, and so was Mr. Duemup. In fact, that gentleman had been close at hand when the previous call was made, being in a little back room with the door ajar, so he could hear all that transpired in the outer office. By means of this very simple device Mr. Duemup could find it very convenient to be "out" when callers came whom he did not care to see. Like nearly all men who aspire to do the public a great service, Mr. Duemup found that there was a considerable portion of the said public who were inclined to look on his efforts in their behalf with ingratitude, not to say suspicion. Some even nourished these suspicions till they became convictions, and threatened the "Bureau," in the person of Mr. Duemup, with chastisement, legal or personal, according to the turn of the aggrieved individual's mind. Mr. Duemup, as a man of peace, had no notion of suffering either if he could avoid it. In consequence it was frequently judicious on the part of the "Bureau" to be "not in."

Norwell advanced to the desk, and presented the little slip, saying:

"I called with reference to this business chance."

"Oh, exactly! Take a seat," replied Mr. Duemup. That gentleman (since modern usage has applied the much-abused term gentleman to all male human beings, except possibly scavengers, while all women without exception are ladies, the reader will excuse its use here) was of medium height, about twenty-five years of age, and dressed in a rather loud, striped business suit. He wore a checkered high collar, and a glass

pin in his tie. On his hand were several conspicuous rings, some plain, others set with stones. He had a hang-dog expression like the other man in the office, except that Mr. Frisky, novelty dealer, was a good natured, sneaking dog, who was content to sell useless gimcracks as the most wonderful inventions of the age, while Mr. Duemup was the vicious kind of brute that would throttle you in the dark on the slightest provocation. His red face was closely shaven, and his coarse lips were rolling the stub of an extinct cigar. His aquiline nose with a meaty "nub" on the end of it, excited the suspicion that he was a guileless Israelite. This, however, was a difficult point to decide.

"What is the nature of your business?" asked Norwell.

"Well you see, I'm running an Employment Bureau. I've a mighty good thing."

"Please explain a little more fully."

"Well you see," replied Mr. Duemup, whose eyes seemed to be constantly scanning a map of Cook county which hung on the opposite wall, "in a city like Chicago there are always thousands of people out of employment, or who are dissatisfied with the work they have."

"I see."

"Well, we advertise in the papers that we can furnish these people employment. We charge each applicant two dollars for registering his name. Ten applicants per day is one hundred and twenty dollars per week, or four hundred and eighty dollars per month. Advertising, which is the main expense, need not exceed seventy-five. That leaves four hundred dollars per month profits, so you see it is a pretty good thing."

"You have not reckoned office expenses, Mr. Duemup."

"Very light. Why," said Duemup confidentially, "I pay only five dollars per month for desk room."

"Cheap enough, I should say. But how about furnishing the applicants with situations?"

Mr. Duemup did not seem very willing to elucidate this point, but replied:

"Well, we send them to places. If they fail to make a contract we can not be responsible for that." Mr. Duemup, indeed, had plenty of places to send people. But, unfortunately, these eager applicants, who had paid perhaps their last two dollars for the reference, found on reaching the place, that no help was wanted, and, moreover, that the people had

never heard of Duemup's "Bureau." Now and then, by way of variety, he sent people to numbers which were vacant lots. But this was not done through any humorous intent. Mr. Duemup was no humorist. It was an unfortunate contingency arising from the nature of his complicated business. It was all the fault of the city Directory which failed to tell what numbers were not built upon.

"I should think it would be difficult to find places for all the applicants."

"Well, you see we advertise very extensively, and people know where to send for good help." Then, leaning over toward Tom, he added confidentially, "That's easily managed." This was a feeler, to see whether the negotiator for an interest in this light, genteel business was troubled with a conscience. Norwell quickly took the cue, and replied:

"Oh, I see, I see. If you happen not to have places, you find 'em, eh?"

"Exactly," replied the "Manager" with a laugh, pleased to discover that his man was all right on this important point.

"Then I should say you have a pretty soft thing."

"Now you're talking."

"Police ever interfere?" Here Mr. Duemup leaned back slightly, threw his head back very softly, almost closed his eyes, and with a bland, insinuating wave of his right hand, said—nothing at all.

"Why don't you keep it all yourself?"

"Well, you see the business is doubling right up on my hands till I can't manage it myself. I need a good office man. There's the advertising and other outside work to look after."

"Two hundred dollars will take a half interest?"

"Yes, if taken immediately. I have another man coming to see me at one. He is anxious to come in, but, frankly, I would rather have you. I like your looks." As Mr. Duemup's eyes had never looked squarely in Norwell's face, it was difficult to see where he had obtained the data necessary to such a favorable opinion.

"Isn't there a good deal of competition in such an easy business?"

"None at all in our particular line." Strictly speaking, the "Manager" told the truth here, as he was a partner in two or three similar "snide" employment agencies in the city. The taking in of a partner, where they could manage to rope in a greenhorn, was as much a part of the business as was the taking in of the public.

"What might I call your name?"

"Norwell."

"Now, Mr. Norwell, I consider this a rare opportunity, but you must decide at once, or the other man comes in. What do you say?"

"I'll consider the matter," replied Tom, rising.

"But you haven't any time to consider it. Such opportunities are rare."

"I shall not come in till I've thought the thing over well."

"All right," replied the manager, who saw that Norwell was not to be caught in his little trap all at once. "Call again when you've made up your mind. Our business talk is confidential, of course."

The next "business chance" which Norwell investigated proved to be of a dramatic nature. A gentleman was wanted to go on the road as treasurer of a "snap" dramatic company. He was also expected to contribute five hundred dollars toward the enterprise to lay the foundation of the treasury as it were. The company were preparing to torture the public with the fascinating new play entitled "Boarding House Frolics, or Only a Masher's Collar." This fearfully and wonderfully constructed example of dramatic high art, as it now flourishes, was expected to draw like a free lunch. The profits of the season would surely reach twenty-five thousand dollars, of which the treasurer could have half by investing the paltry sum of five hundred dollars. Norwell respectfully declined.

One morning Norwell's eye fell on an advertisement worded something like this:

> WANTED.—An advertising solicitor by an agricultural paper having an immense circulation. A rare chance to the right party.
> Address F 39, "Daily Forum."

As this really looked like legitimate business, Norwell addressed F 39, and in reply received a note, asking him to call at the office of "The Farm Home and Hopper," a flamboyant sheet whose spread-eagle sign extended across the whole front of a handsome business block.

On entering the office, Norwell's eyes first fell upon a young lady seated at a desk, busily opening the morning's mail. In the rear was revealed a vista of several rooms, through the open doors of which might be seen some twenty young ladies engaged in addressing envelopes and wrappers.

The "Hopper" was evidently a big concern. Extending his note by way of introduction, he was referred at once to Mr. Powsley, the proprietor, who was then in the private office.

Mr. Powsley was a good-looking, well-dressed young man of about twenty-eight, with a brusque but taking business air. He had none of the sneaking look that characterized Mr. Frisky, and none of the lurking viciousness that strove to conceal itself in Duemup's disagreeable mug. Mr. Powsley's demeanor and conversation announced at once that he was an honest man,—an uncommonly honest one, if his own intimations from time to time were to be taken at par. If that indefinable "something" in his face, which it is the peculiar province of the novelist to discover, contradicted Mr. Powsley's bearing and speech, it was so much the worse for the "indefinable something." A *something* in the countenance has no more right to traduce its owner covertly than that same owner has to traduce somebody else by means of a sneaking anonymous letter.

Mr. Powsley went on to explain that his paper had a *bona fide* circulation of one hundred thousand copies weekly. This large circulation made it a very desirable medium for advertisers, and soliciting for his paper was sure to pay.

"I have never before heard of 'The Farm Home and Hopper,'" remarked Norwell. "Has it been established long?"

"I started the paper ten months ago."

"It has been very successful, I should say. By what means were you enabled to build up so large a circulation so soon?"

"I originated a very popular system of giving prizes to each subscriber. I began by giving each subscriber a little more than the worth of his money, and trusted to luck to get it back in the future. Here is a list of the prizes," and he handed Norwell a long printed slip containing the names of almost every article of popular use, from a span of horses or a piano to a wooden napkin ring.

Norwell began to understand the methods of the "Hopper." It was the old, swindling, gift-distribution scheme, a fraud hoary with antiquity, and which certainly is not bettered by being tacked to a cheap newspaper fraud. Mr. Powsley was very careful to explain that his scheme was no lottery. There was no drawing. Gifts were assigned arbi-

trarily, and every subscriber might get one. (It was a fact, however, that most of them did not.) In his advertisements he described it as an *honest*, *square* plan.

Another feature of Mr. Powsley's scheme deserves special mention. He inserted in thousands of papers throughout the country an advertisement larger than one of the pages of this book, offering to send, for $5.39, a handsome watch, made of aluminum gold,—whatever that may be—worth *twenty-five dollars*. The only conditions attendant on participating in this unparalleled generosity of "The Farm Home and Hopper," were to send $5.39 in advance, and sign an agreement to pay one dollar more for a year's subscription to the "Hopper." The "aluminum gold" watch cost Mr. Powsley probably about one dollar and a half to two dollars wholesale. For time-keeping purposes it equaled a sun dial at night. The paper cost him about twenty cents per year on a liberal estimate.

Mr. Powsley inserted his advertisements exclusively in papers read by farmers. He had a high appreciation of rural intelligence. His scheme was a great success. Letters poured in by the thousand daily. At one time the postoffice, it is said, actually found it necessary to employ a wagon to deliver the immense mail of the "Farm Home and Hopper." This scoundrel was growing rich off those people whose opportunities of understanding the deceitful ways of dishonest schemers are few. Nor was he alone in this business. A host of imitators of the "Hopper" entered this rich field to prey on fools. Some of these papers were owned by Powsley himself.

One paper actually advertised to loan money to its subscribers at four per cent. per annum, the loan to continue as long as the interest was paid, and the borrower remained a subscriber to the paper. This genius (who takes the laurels from Col. Sellers) figured out for his paper a circulation of two hundred and fifty thousand (to be obtained), and on this basis deduced a net profit of three hundred and forty-five thousand dollars per annum! This princely sum was all to be loaned to subscribers.

I do not mention these swindles because they are a novelty. Doubtless, thousands of people understand them fully. But I wish to emphasize the astounding fact that very few seem to care anything about them. They go on and flourish, just as people go about legitimate business. If they are mentioned at

all it is in a careless way as if the public thought such rascality was on the whole rather a smart proceeding. They are virtually abetted by the postoffice department of the United States, for without the mails such swindles as these, and that of Lemming & Miriam would be impossible. What is government instituted for, if not to protect the poor, the weak, the ignorant, as well as those who know how to take care of themselves?

With regard to these swindles, which are a disgrace to our nation, the people are partially to blame. They should see that the laws are enforced against scoundrels of every degree and shade. The best men of the community go their way intent on getting rich themselves, and the entire community apathetically adopts their policy of non-interference. The best laws fall dead and futile if they are not actively supported by the people. *Law* never makes honor. The simple facts are, that the wonderful activity of the present day has made almost anything appear reasonable to the unthinking masses, no matter how absurd or impossible it may really be. Hence, knaves are constantly in waiting to take advantage of the credulity of the public. It is needless to add that Norwell did not work for the "Hopper."

He went home that night tired and thoroughly discouraged. Alice tried to cheer him up by telling him they could get along for awhile without great inconvenience, since she was sure of her twelve dollars per week.

"It is no use answering any more advertisements in the papers," he said. "It seems to me as if those people are nearly all frauds."

"Oh, certainly not all, Tom. There must be some respectable people who advertise for help."

"In that case," he replied moodily, "there are a hundred applicants for each place."

"You will find a place yet, Tom. There are always places for those who really want to work."

Norwell now regretted that he had so hastily rejected the offer of a good situation with that railroad. Though he told Hickley that he did not care to be indebted to Ophir, which was true, he felt at the time that Chetta Ingledee was most probably the cause of his receiving this opportune proffer of a place just as she had helped him out of prison. He was not ungrateful. It was only a matter of pride. He did not like to be indebted to this woman so deeply. He knew that she

loved him, and that she was very persistent about it. This did not anger him. It might, had she been old and ugly. But what man was ever angry because a handsome, accomplished young heiress preferred him? But he disliked that all the favors should come from her. He felt, like most men, that he should confer obligations on the woman. It was, however, only a matter of common politeness to write her thanking her for her interest in his behalf. Then he could not but think how much more suitable a wife this woman would have made than the simple-minded May Bryce. It was almost with regret that he thought of May, though he did not allow his easy-going nature to be greatly disturbed by his reflections. That night he sat down and wrote Chetta a letter which grew to considerable length before he had finished. He alluded to her interest in his behalf, remarked that he had only one friend capable of doing so much, hoped that sometime he could repay the debt, and finished by intimating that he should not forget old friends in New York.

The next evening Norwell went down town to the theatre. There was a noted actor whom he wished to hear, and as Alice refused to go because they could not afford it, Tom went alone and sat in the gallery, where the admission was only twenty-five cents. Coming home, he decided to walk for the exercise, and unwisely went through Washington street tunnel under the river. On the West side, this brought him into a very disreputable locality infested by foot-pads, drunken men and prostitutes. Not caring to remain in such a dangerous vicinity very long at that hour of the night, he hurried along over the soggy wooden sidewalk soaked by spring rains and past dilapidated old pine houses. Two or three blocks west of the river, as he was passing a cross street, a man suddenly sprang from a dark doorway and attempted to knock Norwell down. The latter turning his head quickly received only a glancing blow, which failed in its intended effect. Instantly Norwell's powerful clutch was on the throat of his assailant. Then a second man jumped from the same doorway and struck Norwell over the head with some kind of weapon which left an ugly welt, knocking him senseless. The thieves seized his pocketbook and ran away.

In two or three minutes Norwell, who was not seriously injured, recovered his senses and rose to his feet just as two strangers came along. They inquired what the matter was as soon as they saw that Norwell was not drunk. On hearing

his story, the men inquired of Norwell if he was not a stranger, as they knew that no person knowing the locality would venture there alone at night. They were employed by a Board of Trade Commission firm, and had been detained late on some extra office work. The three walked along together until Tom discovered that they lived near his own boarding house. He related his experiences in looking for a position. One of the men named Wylie, gave Tom his card, and promised to aid him if he could in any way. He added an invitation to call at the office next day.

Norwell went and found a surprise in store for him. Wylie had mentioned his case to the firm, who happened to want another man in the office. The head of the firm, who was an unusually well-informed business man, was pleased with Norwell at once. He listened to the latter's account of his want of success in obtaining employment, and he was touched deeply when Norwell related briefly the misfortunes of his family. In consequence Norwell was employed at once on a salary of twenty dollars per week. Once this sum would not have paid his bills for gloves and flowers. Now he was very glad to have it. Once more he was independent and ready to begin the laborious operation of climbing the ladder from the very bottom.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MIND-FARMING AND HUSBAND-PAINTING.

Miss Bryce had returned to her Illinois home. For some days she entertained her father and mother continually by relating her experiences while visiting in New York. Life in the metropolis and life in her own country home represented almost the utmost extremes of the American social fabric. Mr. and Mrs. Bryce were well informed for people in their station, concerning the usages of urban life, and were greatly interested in May's recitals of the doings and sayings of polite society. They liked to listen, because their daughter's habit of intelligent observation had stored her mind with many ideas and reflections well worth knowing. They prided themselves that their child "was no fool," as plain

country people often put a case of more than ordinary intelligence. Then they had besides the old interest,—as old as the day when the first child was born into the world,—that of being interested in whatever interested the child.

On reaching home, May had written promptly to her lover, and soon received a reply. May had never kept any important secrets from her parents. She would have felt a miserable guiltiness had she attempted a clandestine love affair. The secret would surely have betrayed itself, for she was incapable of dissimulation. Like a dutiful daughter she showed Tom's letter to her mother, and asked if there was any reason why she should not continue such a correspondence. She did not expect a refusal, for her parents never refused her anything. But she dreaded lest her mother might ask how far matters had already gone. Then she must either be guilty of deception or break her promise to her lover, a promise of which she did not realize the full force when she made it. She could do neither. She could only lay herself liable to misconstruction by declining to answer until she obtained Tom's consent to speak. But Mrs. Bryce asked no such question. She had an implicit confidence in her daughter's discretion and sense of filial duty. It was safe to leave everything to her for the present. The mother did privately express some doubts as to the propriety of encouraging an intimacy between Norwell and their daughter. Mrs. Bryce had heard it said that city men often "thought nothing of having two or three girls at once." Mr. Bryce had no such misgivings. He liked Norwell, and was sure that he was a gentleman. He had never seen a young man he would rather have for a son-in-law, provided he really meant anything more than a friendly correspondence. Mrs. Bryce's doubts were silenced, and the matter was discussed no more.

After a time May experienced that sense of loneliness and restless discontent which usually comes to a young person who, having been for a season transferred from a life of quiet monotony to a scene of greater activity, returns again to the old ways. She did not like city life. The midnight glare of gaslight, the babble of light conversation, and the rustle of silken trains, did not comport with her ideas of refined enjoyment. Yet she was not satisfied with the old farm life. She thought there must be an ideal existence somewhere between these two extremes. Her thoughts frequently wandered back

to some of the incidents of her visit in New York. She thought of Chetta Ingledee often, in spite of her attempts to dismiss that young lady from her mind. She recurred to that scene at Brownell's, when Tom led Chetta out for the Virginia reel. Again and again she pictured the expression on Chetta's face, and it always seemed to her one of triumph. The thought was unpleasant, and yet it persisted in coming back frequently. Then she thought of Chetta as a possible rival, and her heart sank. She, with her country breeding, could not hope to win in a contest with that accomplished young lady, who was thoroughly schooled in all those refined arts of attracting men, which are so effectively employed by those women who happen to be beautiful and artful at the same time. What if Chetta Ingledee deliberately set herself to take away May's gallant lover? The fear of such a result made her heart sick. But she fortified her spirits with the consolation that Tom Norwell, whatever other men might be, could never prove untrue. No, her demi-god, the soul of manly honor, could never be guilty of deception.

Enjoined by her lover to keep their tender secret from the world, and with no congenial friends of her own age and sex, May's position was not a happy one. She could not even lay her doubts and fears before her mother,—that friend whose love never changed, concerning whose affection and sympathy doubt was impossible. She could not even make a confidant of Alice. She wondered why her lover was so sensitive on this one point. He would not insist if he only knew the misery it caused her. But then he must be right in this matter, he must know better than she. She would bravely struggle against these doubts until time removed them. She scarcely appeared to have the old-time elasticity of manner. Mrs. Bryce thought that perhaps late hours and the excitement to which May was unaccustomed had slightly affected her health during her visit. The color on her cheek looked too brilliant for perfect health. It seemed rather a hectic glow. Her eyes, which were rather large and always bright, had assumed a pearly appearance of the cornea. She occasionally felt at times too, a slight shortness of breath which, however, caused her no alarm. Mrs. Bryce, thinking that sleep was all her daughter needed, was careful to see that everybody in the house was in bed by nine o'clock.

May was delighted to hear that the Norwells were about to move to Chicago. As soon as they were located there

(she drove her pony and buggy to the station every day for letters at this particular time) she at once wrote Alice a long letter. On the whole it was a cheerful epistle, and a very friendly one. The Bryces all joined in an invitation to the Norwells to visit them in their country home. The distance and the running of trains were such that people from the city could run out at any time on Saturday afternoon and return Monday.

Things were going smoothly with the Norwells. They had a pleasant boarding place, and had made some agreeable acquaintances. Among other intimate friends were Mr. and Mrs. Wylie. The Wylies had a pleasant little home of their own, and as the men worked in the same office, they were all on a very friendly footing. Alice liked her work, and was pleased to see that steady occupation had a beneficial effect on her brother, who was naturally inclined, as she realized more and more, to indulge visionary schemes. They were paying their way as they went, and had mutually agreed to lay by a small fixed sum from their not very liberal salaries for a wet day. With scrupulous fidelity Alice placed her share of the fund in a little box kept for the purpose. Each put the money in a separate envelope. After the lapse of a few weeks Alice was greatly surprised to find Tom's envelope empty. Her first thought was that a sneak thief had stolen the money. Then she knew that was impossible, for he would have taken hers at the same time. She at once had her suspicions aroused as to what became of it. That evening she remarked to her brother:

"Tom, the money is missing from your envelope. Did you remove it?"

"Yes, I took it out," he answered rather uneasily. "Did you want some money?"

"No, but I thought we had agreed to save together."

"So we did, and so we shall; but the fact is, Alice, I saw a chance to make a good investment."

"Oh, Tom!" she exclaimed with anguish in tone and look, "have you been speculating again?" He was touched at the feeling she exhibited. He had been the means of bringing this sister to poverty, and, though it was hard for his sensitive nature to forget her hasty words when she had by implication called him a thief, he was not capable of cruelty, and he owed her very much indeed.

"Why, Alice, don't take it to heart like that," he said

kindly. "It was only twenty-five dollars I had saved. I took it out and bought wheat. I cleared one hundred dollars, and I'll put fifty into the envelope if you say so."

"Dear brother, it is not the money I care for, it is the principle. Don't be angry with me now, Tom, but I must say what I feel. Please promise me not to speculate any more."

The mania for gambling had taken possession of him. He could not give it up. He said, after a pause:

"Alice, I hardly think you ought to ask that of me. Others have made money that way. I may see a golden opportunity."

"Think of what it has already done for us. Think of father," and her voice trembled at this reference to that saddest of all events in their lives. "Think of yourself a few months ago. Please promise, for my sake."

"Sister, I will promise you not to make any more deals at present."

"Say never, Tom."

"No, Alice," he replied firmly, "I can not bind myself forever by rash promises which I may regret sometime. I promise for the present." That was all she could get him to say, and with a foreboding that sometime his weakness would lead him to utter ruin, she was obliged to be satisfied.

The visit to the Bryces was made in due time. It was in early spring when the tiny green spears of grass were just beginning to pierce the loose, black prairie soil. Buds were swelling on the willow trees, and the venturesome maple was pushing out its red buds at imminent peril of frost, suspending the work in alarm with each chilly north wind. An Illinois spring is a very disappointing affair, with a great deal of promise, and very small performance. Like a shy lover it dallies with expectant nature, till bolder summer, warm with desire, is led a willing bride to bowers sweet with the perfume of flowers and growing corn. Alice thought the wide, rolling prairies very beautiful. Their novelty was pleasing to her eyes, which had always been accustomed to long rows of stone and brick, or the pent up hills of the Hudson. She was charmed with the clean country, the pure invigorating air, and the bright April sunshine which fell in a universal flood, instead of struggling in a meager stream between lofty buildings.

It so happened that a neighbor of Mr. Bryce's who

owned a great deal of land, had a quarter section to rent. The former tenant had lost his wife suddenly, and concluded to give up the place. Any one beginning at once would be in time to get all the spring crops, chiefly corn, potatoes and oats, into the ground in season. Mr. Bryce, who had learned from Norwell nearly all about his affairs, advised him to take this farm and work it one season. The idea was a new one to Norwell. He was afraid he knew too little about farming. But Mr. Bryce offered to tell him just when to do everything, and inform him as to the best methods. He had taken a liking to Norwell and was anxious to have him succeed. He thought a farm judiciously handled better than twenty dollars a week in the city with heavy living expenses. Alice was ready to favor the idea because it might wean Tom from his dangerous inclination to risk money in speculation, whereas his present business threw him directly into the midst of it. Norwell concluded to remain over another day to look at the farm, and telegraphed the firm that he should be detained longer than he expected.

May was delighted to have Alice Norwell with her another day. In truth, she had always been secretly in awe of that young lady's superior knowledge of the world, and matter of fact way of looking at everything. She hoped to establish thoroughly cordial relations with her future sister-in-law, and now began to believe that the work was effectually accomplished. Alice treated her with a frank friendliness that left no doubt of the feelings which prompted such actions. The only question in May's mind was what would she say if she knew of the secret engagement! May had felt that this secrecy had been all wrong from the beginning, and as things stood now it grew daily more impolitic if not to say, improper. But she left everything to Tom as he had requested, hoping all would be well in the end.

That Sunday afternoon the girls sat in May's cosy room up stairs, engaged in confidential chat. The men were at the barn, looking at the horses and cattle. Mrs. Bryce was in the kitchen with apron on and sleeves rolled up, busy cleaning up the dinner dishes. The young ladies were discussing the subject of husbands as young ladies will. Various theories were advanced concerning the nature of the animal in question. His desirable points were dwelt upon, and the possibility (!) that he might possess undesirable traits alluded to as a factor to be considered. Then there was considerable husband-

painting done. The journalist constructs at times something which he calls a pen-picture of some noted personage. These maidenly fancies might be called mind-pictures of future partnership possibilities. Alas, the garrets of maiden imagination are full of portraits of manly hero-husbands whose personality has never yet been projected into this prosy, selfish world. The real husband, when once securely in the matrimonial noose where he can not easily evade close inspection, often proves but a sorry hack, compared with the knightly ideal which he resembles about as much as a mule resembles the spirited Arabian courser. I am aware that this comparison is open to criticism, but it is respectfully submitted to the highest authority on the subject—wives. Wife-painting is a pastime that produces like unsatisfactory results. Miles and miles of youthful art galleries are filled with glowing ideals, half fairy, half angel, which bear small resemblance to life's great gallery of womanhood, some in calico, some in satin, some "homely as a brush fence," others beautiful—all only women. Not an angel among them, young man.

May Bryce drew an outline, which in physical proportions and personal peculiarities, strikingly resembled Tom Norwell. Whether this was intentional, or whether it was an unconscious expression of her own frequent meditations, was not apparent. At any rate, if Alice Norwell recognized the portrait of her brother, she said nothing to indicate the fact. For her part, she replied, that while it was well for every one to have an ideal of excellence for the opposite sex, it was foolish to appropriate that ideal to one's self. No individual could attain in all things to the excellence of the type, just as the sculptor requires many different models before he can construct the ideal human figure.

Before the Norwells returned it was decided that Tom should take the farm and the farm implements all ready to go to work. He bought also a team of horses, which the owner was willing to sell at a great sacrifice, as he was anxious to go to Kansas. Norwell still had a few hundreds due him in New York from good parties, which made it safe for him to assume these obligations. Mr. Bryce went his security and the whole thing was arranged.

Two weeks intervened before they were to move to the farm. During this period the Norwells entertained their friends with a relation of their expectations. Tom had

figured out so many bushels of corn to be raised at so much per bushel, so many bushels of oats, so many bushels of potatoes, so many tons of hay, and so on through the list. He figured out about one thousand dollars profit from one hundred and sixty acres of land in one season.

Wylie was not so sanguine. He had been brought up on a farm and knew about what could be done and what could not. He would have advised Tom not to try it at all had he been consulted before the lease was signed.

Alice was very sanguine also. She had given up her position in the school willingly, although the Principal had offered to raise her salary at once to twenty dollars per week after only one month's experience. She hoped to be able to make something on the farm, and aid her brother too; she did not expect to make so much as twenty dollars per week of course, but she would undertake this for his sake. She was willing to make almost any sacrifice for him. Then she thought country life would be an agreeable change. She felt sure she would like it. She had read in the agricultural columns of papers what wonderful things Dame Nature would do on a farm if only tickled properly, things by the way, seldom done, except in the editor's sanctum. Each cow would produce so much butter; each hen lay an egg daily (including Sunday, for hens know nothing of the second commandment); there would be so many spring chickens to sell. Now Alice was by no means ignorant of the old saw which links arithmetical operations with incipient poultry. She knew that chickens always had been raised, and always would be. A hen could brood so many, and allowing for losses, it was easy to tell about how many would be left.

"Mrs. Wylie," Alice remarked one day, "we are going to have strawberries, too, and I shall send you some."

"Oh, that will be so nice." Mrs. Wylie, like Alice, had a rather vague notion of the various stages in the career of the strawberry before it is placed on the table a tempting mass of lusciousness ready to be sacrificed in the interests of the cream and sugar trades. Both of them overlooked the fact that the strawberry plant in the natural course of events precedes the strawberry itself.

"Then we shall have abundance of peas and all sorts of garden stuff. Oh, you must come and see us."

"Thank you, Miss Norwell, we will. It would be so nice, if we can only get away. I should like country fare.

I'm tired to death of having things that have been carted around till they are stale."

"And then we shall have melons, too. But I'm afraid we can't have ice. Bryces hang their melons in the well to cool."

"And then it will be very nice to go right to the trees and pick your cherries and apples fresh. One need use only the best. I shall coax Mr. Wylie to go, if I can."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES.—RAISING GARDEN "SASS."—A SPELL OF WEATHER, AND A BOTTOMLESS CORNFIELD.

Moving day came, and the Norwells were duly installed in their new home. The house, which was about a mile from Bryce's, was a squatty, barn-like structure, with a low kitchen at one side, the whole resembling an enormous dry goods box with a smaller one set against it. The house had once been painted a sort of brown, but the paint was nearly all washed off, except in streaks, where some quality of the lumber had retained it. Just now a dingy, old-wood color predominated. The barn did not look greatly unlike the house. The board fence around the yard had gone to rack badly, and the former tenant had milked the cows in the door-yard, because it was "handy." A rickety old chain-pump stood about two rods from the kitchen door. This machine required such a prodigious amount of turning before any water appeared that one was inclined to believe the whole thing a base fraud, like those bands on a boy's garments which represent fictitious pockets, to the owner's constant annoyance and humiliation. As the party most interested, the boy realizes that the nature of his possessions require ample pocket room, in fact, that his garments should be pretty much all pockets.

A humanitarian object in the shape of a martin box, stuck lop-sided on a tall pole, leaned dangerously toward the kitchen. On the other side stood another tall pole, on which hung a clumsy bell to call the men to dinner. This pole was so shaky, and wobbled so much when the bell was rung, that

its use always put Alice into a tremor of apprehension. Jim Cain, the hired man, however, pronounced it safe. The landscape between the road and the house was ornamented by a half-dead pine tree, one wholly dead, and a few shaggy withered rose bushes. Two small, flowering shrubs were striving to get a start in the world by shielding their spindling forms within old flour barrels. The former tenant remarked rather ambiguously of these that his wife had set 'em over 'em to save 'em.

The inside of the house was not much more inviting than the outside. It was awkwardly arranged, so that the women had to walk half-way round the kitchen to get to the woodshed. The kitchen floor was "dished" into heights and hollows, owing to the leaking of the roof, which warped the boards. Upstairs Alice was obliged to change the hired man's bed around from place to place when it rained hard, in order to preserve it from irrigation. When the rain came up in the night the hired man was expected to shift for himself. The bad condition of the premises might be partially explained by the fact that the house had never been occupied by the owner, in other words, it was a "tenant house." Nevertheless, it was neither better nor worse than many houses occupied by owners themselves.

Alice thought the first thing to be done was to repair the yard fence, so as to keep the cattle away from the house. Tom agreed, and this was done at once. There was a very poor fence around the garden. That was repaired next, and a gate hung, so that it was possible to enter the inclosure. The former tenant had allowed the garden gate to fall from its hinges. It was then placed crosswise in the opening and propped in place by a rail set obliquely against it. This latch ten feet long was very effective, but not very convenient, as the women folks were obliged to lift it away every time they entered the garden, or climb over at great risk to skirt and limb. The previous tenant "reckoned things ort to be slicked up a little, an' he had 'lowed to do it, but he 'lowed the necessities of the crops was of more importance than the gyarden. It took him moseyin' lively to git the corn crop tended to." He and his wife were from a border Southern State, and possessed that peculiar dilatoriness, which is by no means laziness, and is brim full of good-natured intentions. It always "'lows to git round to a thing," but never gets there.

"Tom, I haven't seen any strawberry bed. Bryce's will bloom in a few days."

"Alice, I think our strawberry bed has gone on a vacation." These remarks took place while they were discussing the possibilities of the situation a day or two after their arrival.

"I think it must have done so, but we must have another at once, if we expect berries this season."

"Great Jupiter, do you think you can set out the plants and have strawberries, too, in a month?"

"The books say they will bear the first year."

"Books be hanged! I tell you it can't be done." So the Norwells decided that they would quietly lop off one luxury, a dainty one, from the list. As mind-gardening gave place to ground-gardening, other dainty articles of diet disappeared one by one under the stern logic of hard facts.

Tom and the hired hand were busy plowing for corn, while Alice was industriously cleaning house and doing some landscape gardening in the front yard. She had cleaned the old house from top to bottom, laid a plain carpet in the best room, nailed pieces of tin carefully over rat holes, and pasted illustrated papers neatly over some breaks in the kitchen plastering. Her limbs and back ached fit to crack at this hard labor, to which she was unaccustomed. But Tom had been obliged to hire a hand, and they were not able to hire a girl, too. Then she learned that this was the customary work of farmers' wives and daughters. She could do what others did. She knew that her brother sorely needed help, and she determined to help him while she could. That might not be long. In a recent letter Arthur Wilson had asked her to be his wife, and she had consented. She had at first told Tom, and it made him happy to know that his sister would be placed above want, whether their farming venture paid or not. For the present she was glad to make herself as useful as possible, even at the drudgery of a woman's life on a farm.

One Saturday afternoon Tom and the hired hand spaded up the garden, broke the clods, leveled the ground, and laid off beds for onions, lettuce, beets, and peas. All the next week the weather was delightful, and Alice was busy planting her garden. It was with great pride that she reported progress to the men folks every evening.

One thing was yet lacking which must be attended to

soon. They had no chickens. They must have some at once, so they could have eggs to eat and raise some chickens. Tom had made arrangements to get the chickens from a neighbor. On the same Saturday afternoon on which Alice completed her garden, he drove over for the fowls, and brought back ten fine hens and a rooster. The chickens were put to roost in a little hen house back of the barn, and, very tired, the family retired to rest. They had preaching only every other Sunday in their Presbyterian church, at Prairie Grande. As there was no service next day, they concluded to lie abed late, city fashion, and take a good night's rest. About eight o'clock they rose, and the men went out to feed the horses and milk the cows, while Alice got breakfast.

After a while Tom came in with a half serious, half quizzical expression on his face.

"Alice, your garden is a great success. Most of the stuff is up already."

"Why, that can't be. The onions that I planted Monday were peeping yesterday, but the peas hadn't sprouted. I dug some up to see."

"They're up now any way."

"You're fooling."

"Look for yourself."

"Peas must sprout very quick when they get started, I think." Alice went to the garden to look at this miracle of vegetation. The things were indeed up. The chickens had evidently been up, too. The garden was scratched into a wild chaos of confusion from one end to the other. The neat borders of the beds were obliterated almost completely.

Onions lay here and there with their shining coats conspicuous in the morning sun or half buried in the loose soil. Swollen, dropsical peas dotted the ground where the long pea rows had been. The smaller, dark-colored seeds modestly hid themselves as if ashamed to confess the ignominious treatment to which they had been subjected.

Alice gazed at the ruin for some minutes in dire dismay. Then she returned to the kitchen only to witness another domestic disaster on a smaller scale. At the door she was greeted by the odor of "something burning." She rushed into the kitchen to find smoke pouring from the stove like an incipient volcano. She had just put in two or three pieces of dry board before going out, and now her batch of breakfast

biscuits were burned to a cinder. This was more than the most equable temper could be expected to endure with unruffled composure.

"It serves you right, Tom," said Alice, looking ruefully at the smoking biscuits. "You had no business to send me on a fool's errand. There's only soggy bread, and you may quit when you have eaten that."

Somehow Alice found it a difficult matter to make the bread supply last as it should. She had never known men to have such voracious appetites. Her brother ate twice as much as he had ever done before, and as for Jim Cain, well, his appetite was to her a constant source of wonder. It was incomprehensible to her how any human being could stow away such enormous quantities of bread and butter, ham, mashed potatoes and coffee. Their bill of fare had little variety, but he certainly made up in quantity. However, Jim was a first-class hand and a good fellow, so he was made welcome to all he wanted, notwithstanding the danger of exhausting the larder. Breakfast, which consisted of bread that had failed to rise, fried bacon and coffee, was dispatched in silence. That afternoon they went over to Bryce's, and Alice sought advice and consolation from Mrs. Bryce and May. The latter offered to go and stay a week with Alice, and assist her to get started in housekeeping. But Alice was independent, and while profiting by advice, was determined to succeed by her own efforts.

On the next Monday morning they were to begin planting corn, but when morning came it was raining hard. The weather had been fine, and the ground in splendid condition. Now nothing could be done that day or the next, as it was too wet. For want of a better job the men penned the chickens in the hen-house to save the garden from future devastation. Arrangements were made for feeding and watering the fowls. Next morning it was still raining, and the men went to town after attending to some chores in the barn.

In the routine of a farmer's wife there is no interval between the morning work and the beginning of preparations for dinner. Alice sat down for a moment to think. She looked out at the dreary, monotonous stretch of rain-soaked country over which the dark clouds hung apparently little higher than a tall tree. The water stood in puddles in the yard and splashed in a long waving line from the eaves of the barn. Its monotonous drip was everywhere. Then that re-

minded her that perhaps Jim's bed up stairs was not in the best place to avoid the dripping water. She took another pan and went up stairs. Nearly all the spare tinware and vessels about the house were already placed under the leaks to save the best room below. Up stairs she looked out again over the dull landscape dotted here and there in the distance by the dim outlines of farm-buildings. She felt depressed and lonesome. She wondered how she could ever have seen anything beautiful in this dull country, or how farmers found life endurable at all. She had no time to read. The Bryces, Deacon Brown's folks and one or two other families were their only really intelligent neighbors. They had a few books, a good newspaper and a popular magazine, but she never had time to do more than glance at the illustrations in the latter. When she quit work at night she was actually too tired to read. Perhaps this was partly because she did not understand her work sufficiently to have it well in hand, but if the present state of affairs were to continue always she thought she would just as soon not live at all. And yet her position was no worse than that of thousands of farmers' wives and their husbands, too, who toil through life in this way, unable in some cases, unwilling in many cases, to attempt anything better. As a result there is a constant stream of intelligent country people seeking the city where they prefer to subsist on a pittance rather than go back to the farm. And yet country life to those who know how to improve its advantages furnishes the greatest amount of real happiness to be found anywhere. The domestic virtues take deeper root there. The farm is the nursery of great men.

The wet weather continued the third day. There was the same monotonous dripping from the eaves, as the rain settled into a persistent downpour. The prairies were soaked like a sponge, and every tread of the foot caused a wheezy sqush as the displaced water spirted out. The "sloughs" became creeks of running water and overflowed the level ground near them. Norwell, whose animal spirits were inclined to teeter up and down from a dangerous height of buoyancy to an opposite depth of despondency, since his reverses, became exceedingly blue. Planting for some time would be out of the question; meantime May was passing rapidly, and it would soon be late for corn planting. He tried to read, but quit frequently to scan the dull, slow-moving clouds. He talked with Jim on the prospects for late corn making a crop. It

was a new experience and a very disagreeable one to him, to be engaged in a business where he could only sit and wait. Disappointment was telling on his naturally equable temper. He grew moody, and said cross things to Alice. The wet spell continued for two weeks, raining every day. At times as the drizzling, persistent rain threatened to ruin all prospects of a crop, Norwell got into a condition almost bordering on desperation. He imagined the very worst things possible. Suppose they were unable to make any crop at all! There was nothing apparently but starvation before them. It was in vain that Jim offered consolation in the philosophical remark that "it couldn't rain always."

Norwell went over to Bryce's frequently, where his coming always made May very happy, and his going left her miserable. She was happy to have him near, and miserable because she could not help noticing that he was not the light-hearted young man she had once seen him. She attributed this to his financial reverses, and tried to console him with arguments that riches were not necessary to true happiness. But as his views in this respect were so directly opposed to her own, her efforts were a signal failure. Then she employed those little arts which are so natural to a refined, interesting young woman, but Tom never seemed quite at ease. He was as kind as ever, and observing of all those social courtesies which his early training had made second nature to him, but there was something lacking. Finally the dreadful thought occurred to her that possibly he no longer cared for her. He had always told her they could not marry till he made money. Now, perhaps, he might want to be released, for riches seemed farther off than ever. Meantime, she was concealing their engagement from her father and mother. She felt guilty, but her timid modesty made it impossible to speak to him again on the subject of marriage till he was ready to speak first.

Mrs. Bryce's experienced eye soon discovered that there was something more between the young people than appeared on the surface. She hinted as much to her husband, but his answer was:

"Mary, you're always scart about something. May is a good girl and a sensible one. Tom Norwell is a gentleman. Maybe they are only good friends. Just let 'em alone awhile."

"I don't know about letting them alone. They have

been together a good deal in New York and ought to know their minds by this time. I've always heard it said that a town young man is never satisfied unless he has two or three girls."

"Shucks, Mary, that's all nonsense. Tom Norwell isn't that sort of a man, I'm satisfied. If you want to, you might drop the child a hint not to be too forward with him."

"Jacob, *that* is nonsense too. You know our child never was forward."

"Then just say nothing for awhile."

In spite of this confidence Mrs. Bryce did give May a hint which was received with respectful silence, no word of reply being ventured.

During these wet-day visits, Mr. Bryce would, by his hearty good nature, the result of perfect health, prosperity and a well-balanced mind, talk Norwell into a more cheerful mood. The old farmer laughed at Tom's fears.

"Never mind Norwell, we'll get our corn in all right yet. It is never too late while the month of May lasts. It is a little wetter than common, but when you've farmed it fifty years you will get used to all sorts o' ups and downs."

The rain ended. The hand of adversity must take its turn at the bottom on the dial of events. A clear sky and a warm sun followed the wet weather. The water disappeared as if by magic. The sloughs became silver threads as they wound through the green springing grass that bent gracefully before the current. The pools sank away with remarkable rapidity. The trees sprang into full leaf under the hot sun almost as if nature had touched an electric button and set her machinery in full operation in an instant. The birds sang, twittered and builded everywhere. The wild flowers in the prairies, on such small patches as had never been disturbed by the plow, began to show their bright colors that contrasted so well with the exquisite green of the grass. Nature, had she tried, could scarcely have produced a greater contrast than that presented between the cold, drizzling, leaden landscape of a few days before, and this marvelous scene of bursting life and beauty. Jim said it would be three or four days before the ground was dry enough for corn planting.

On the second day Norwell grew very impatient. He thought there was no need of waiting so long. Jim had gone to town, and at dinner time Tom announced his intention of

hitching to the planter and making a start. There was no water visible on the surface, and that was one evidence that the ground was dry enough. The whole operation was as new to him as it would have been for him to attempt to lead a regiment of soldiers into battle. But he thought he was capable of managing the matter without Jim. He had found no serious trouble in plowing, though it was awkward at first. He harnessed the horses, hitched them to the planter, filled the seed box with corn, and drove into the field to begin. The ground was much softer than he expected. The horses sank in the loose soil almost to the knees at times. Their feet struck the ground with a peculiar plout, plout, plout, and the tracks instantly filled with soft mud and water. Under its own weight and his, the machine sank so deep into the loose soil that its axle scraped the ground in places, making a broad trail as if a barn door loaded with stone had been dragged along. It was with difficulty the horses could draw it as they floundered in the mud. Norwell began to conclude that it was rather wet for planting, but there was one thing sure, he was getting it in deep enough.

He drove along slowly till he came to a place where the ground was hollowed slightly like a big shallow dish. The place looked like an immense pan of soft black pudding. Here and there a very small pool of water showed above the oozy surface. Norwell unhesitatingly drove the team into this spot, but to his consternation they stopped, unwilling to proceed. The restive animals drew their feet from the mud, only to sink deeper. The planter settled into the ground at an astonishing rate, and threatened to disappear entirely. Norwell urged the horses forward, but they obstinately refused to budge. Then he jumped off the planter to lead them and found himself sinking in the loose black mud up to his shoe tops. Taking the horses by the bits he tried to lead them forward. They either could not or would not move an inch. Growing impatient he struck the leader a blow with the ends of the lines. The restive animal making a desperate plunge to free himself, reared his fore quarters high in the air, and came down with a thud, knocking down his driver. Tom's feet had sunk so deep in the mud that he could not get out of the way, and he was thrown flat on his back with his legs under the horse's body, which sank deep into the oozy soil. The situation was an exceedingly dangerous one. Norwell was uninjured because he sank into the mud so read-

ily, that the weight of the animal, though very painful, was not liable to injure his limbs immediately. But the other horse was badly frightened, and was pulling sideways so hard that the harness would soon choke his prostrate fellow to death. Then if the animal still standing, lost his head and began to plunge, he was very liable to fall on top of both, and kill his owner and his mate.

In this terrible situation Tom retained his presence of mind. He first yelled at the top of his voice for assistance. Then, with much painful effort, he succeeded in getting his pocket-knife out, and by reaching forward in a way that twisted his body unmercifully, and made his legs feel as if they were about to be pulled off, he with much difficulty cut the hame-string of the fallen animal, and insured him from choking. This also enabled the other horse to stand easier, being relieved from the weight of his fellow. That weight however, came so heavy now on Norwell's thighs, that he felt as if his limbs were bursting. He called again, and fortunately two men were passing along the road only a short distance away. They heard him, and ran to the rescue. To cut away the harness and free the other horse was but the work of a moment. Then, while one of them patted the prostrate animal and coaxed him to rise, the other grasped Tom's arms firmly, and prepared to drag him out as soon as the horse began to get up, for there was danger that the animal might crush the prostrate man. With a snort, a desperate effort and a shower of mud, the horse sprang to his feet, and Tom was extricated in safety. Neither he nor the horse was in the least injured.

"You was in a mighty ticklish fix, stranger," said one of the men.

"Well, I was for a fact. I'm obliged to you. I think you have saved my life."

Then, as the ludicrous phase of the accident struck Norwell he burst into a hearty laugh followed by the other men who had been considerately suppressing their risibility. After all there was nothing broken to speak of, and nothing hurt. Tom, plastered from head to foot with mud, put the horses in the stable and went to the house.

"Why, Tom," said Alice, "what on earth have you been doing?"

"Planting corn, that's all. It's very muddy work I find,"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE POETRY OF SHEEP-SHEARING.—ALSO A LITTLE BACKACHE.

The corn was finally got into the ground in good order before the end of May. Then, before the crop was ready to cultivate, came sheep-shearing with those farmers who attempted sheep-keeping on the broad prairies. Mr. Bryce as a large farmer, kept a little of every kind of stock known to the country, and had some three hundred head of fine sheep. It was arranged that Norwell and his hired hand, Jim Cain, should assist one of Bryce's hired men to shear.

If the reader does not already suspect it, it may be as well to inform him right here, that this narrative has reached a poetical period in its progress. There is perhaps more poetry and traditional sentiment associated with the sheep or bottled up in his innocent anatomy, ready for instant use, than in any other natural production. When the spring poet is hard put to for a simile, the playful lambkin always gambols in to his assistance, though why the cub of the polar bear has never been associated with the Northwestern spring is beyond comprehension. His constitution and habits certainly fit him for enduring the rigors of a May blizzard far better than the lambkin. This constant readiness on the part of the lamb to help poets and school girl essay writers out of a hole is exceedingly kind of him, seeing that his presence is often demanded when a Norther has caused the thermometer to skurry down in the neighborhood of zero inside a few hours. Then when the politician or the political journalist is in need of a striking, yet simple and touching figure, he pictures his party (which he calls the people) as the immaculate lamb, while the opposite party is the unspeakable wolf, whose mouth waters for a bite of this delicious, fresh mutton. Himself he poses as the valiant shepherd, and guards the fold by snugly tucking the lamb into his own vest pocket. Then the theologian dreams of a time, too, when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, the lamb outside that royal sneak,

instead of inside, as has been the custom heretofore. Virgil found the lamb indispensable to a species of poetry called bucolic, and poets have ever since worked this apparently inexhaustible vein, until the lamb is as necessary to the poet-aster as moonshine is to penny a line love. But as a type of a Northwestern spring, I insist that we must have the polar bear, or at least the arctic fox.

In the eyes of many city people country life is beatified by a constant halo of poetry. The school readers of twenty-five years ago pictured haying as a most romantic and enviable occupation. They spoke of tossing the sweet-scented hay into the fragrant breezes, as if it had been delightful play instead of a back-breaking, throat-parching, muscle-grinding, early-and-late operation, the only pleasure pertaining to which was the fact that it was at last done. The writer of those very sentimental but enormous lies, by some unaccountable summersault of his imagination (for he never held a pitchfork in his life) had pictured hay-making as a very agreeable pastime, something similar, for example, to eating a lemon cream with a bewitching young lady. This description of hay-making was as incomprehensible to the country boy who knew all about it, as it was misleading to the city boy who knew nothing about it. The former could not make it out. He had little help from his teachers, because school teachers in those days, and very often nowadays unfortunately, were so intent on giving the mill so many revolutions per day that they never noticed whether it was grinding or not, and thus often ran with an empty hopper. Then, the juvenile brain, as now, was often dull, and the impatient teacher, despairing of inciting ideas in the proper region, frequently attempted to stimulate them on other portions of the anatomy, doubtless on the principle of counter irritation. So if teacher or pupil gave this literature any thought at all, which was seldom, they concluded it must refer to hay-making in some other world. Had the writer of such school books ever pitched dusty hay onto a stack for twelve hours per day with a big three-pronged fork till every pore of his body dripped sweat, till his back seemed ready to crack every minute, and his tongue was as dry as a smoked herring, then perhaps he would have known how to get a few bed-rock facts into his description of hay-making. And so the enchantment of most agricultural labor, including that which pertains to sheep husbandry, lies chiefly in the fact that you can let some other fellow perform it.

On Monday morning all was ready at Bryce's to begin the sheep-shearing. The men were dressed in their oldest clothes, and besides wore blue cotton blouses. Mr. Bryce was to do nothing but roll the wool into neat fleeces, clean side out, and oversee the work generally. "Boys, you three ought to clean up the whole three hundred in three days easily," he remarked before they began. Low platforms about two feet and a quarter high had been arranged to shear on. The sheep were penned in the same shed where they would be handy to catch. The animal to be sheared is not tied in any way, but simply set upright on its hindquarters. The shearer places his left foot on an elevated rest, and leans the body of the sheep backward over his left thigh, and begins operations, having both hands free to engage in the work. The manure had lately been hauled from the shed, a part of which had no roof. The night before a slight shower had wet the smooth, discolored, putty-looking ground, and it was now about as slippery as a layer of soft soap. The two hired men by a dexterous dash caught a sheep apiece and showed Norwell how to begin by first shearing the entire head carefully, then working down and around the body.

"Now Norwell," said Jim, "go in and catch your sheep." Norwell went in. There was a twinkling of numerous sheep's heels, but to his surprise, among so many legs he was not able to lay hold of any. He had been cautioned not to catch them by the wool, which was much easier. The sheep, as if fleeing for dear life, scuttled away to the far end of the shed. Norwell and Mr. Bryce drove them back, and Tom prepared for another dash. About the center of the exposed part of the shed was a little hole in the smooth ground filled with water. In his second dash Norwell selected a particular sheep which, of course, made frantic efforts to evade him.

"Take any one," yelled Bryce. As the twinkling legs flitted past him he made another dash. But he had not noticed the little pool of water. His feet were in the air in a second, and he sat down in that hole with what seemed to him extraordinary celerity. He felt as if he had sat down with a striking force of about a ton. The dirty water flew in a spray in every direction. The shearers dropped their shears and devoted themselves for a brief space to a rib-starting explosion at this most ludicrous attitude of Norwell as he sat for a moment in the hole where water had been, but where it was no more. He rose slowly and looked into the little hol-

low which had just fit his well-proportioned body. He was surprised that the hole was no deeper; he thought he had sat down hard enough to make a cavity at least twice as deep.

"You're a capital swab," said Mr. Bryce.

"Making post-holes?" queried Bryce's man.

"How is the subsoil down there, Norwell?" asked Jim.

"Not so yielding as I expected." Then Norwell realized that he was dripping from head to foot with the dirty water. But he had on cast-off clothing, and the weather was warm. Then a man's appearance, which is everything in the city, is nothing in the country, particularly in sheep-shearing.

Next time a sheep was caught with very little difficulty. Norwell began, according to directions, on the animal's nose and worked upward around its eyes and ears. He was surprised at the number of protuberances about a sheep and wondered how they had survived so many shearings without having been all clipped off. The poor sheep realizing that he was in the hands of a novice, was uneasy, and suddenly turned his head. Tom was horrified at seeing a vicious slash of the stiff-springed shears cut off a great piece from one eyebrow. This was a sort of ante-mortem not down on the bills. Tom felt uneasy at such wicked work, but clipped away and tried to mop off the blood with bits of waste wool. Pretty soon the sheep gave another sudden turn of his head, and the unfeeling shears lopped off the point of one ear. Tom Norwell now began to wish that some scientist was present to improve the occasion of so much vivisection. Mr. Bryce, who happened along, seeing this surgical operation, said good humoredly:

"Steady, Norwell, steady. A sheep can stand a good deal of pruning and not mind it, but you must leave a little of him, a sort of graft, you know, or he may not pull through."

"Mr. Bryce, I think you had better send for the coroner at once. I don't believe there will be enough of this sheep left to make even a graft by the time I get through, and the inquest had better be held while there is plenty of remains."

"If you don't reduce him too much he will pull through. Pshaw, he'll not know the difference in a week."

"Why wouldn't it be a good scheme," asked Jim, "to put the lambs' tails into a flower-pot when we cut them off, and raise another crop of lambs from them?"

"Jim, I'll let you have 'em, free, when you get ready to go into the sheep business," replied Mr. Bryce. Then they

all laughed uproariously at this tremendous witticism, just as the countryman does at a circus joke on its fortieth annual appearance.

Norwell was surprised, after finishing the very ticklish operation of shearing the head, to find that the body of a sheep consisted of little else but wrinkles. Jim told him to straighten them out with his left hand. But the wrinkles always seemed to reappear at the critical moment, and always just under the big, sharp shears. Then a piece of skin was snipped out which appeared about the size of a dime. But when the helpless victim wriggled himself into a position where this spot was on a bump instead of on a wrinkle, it appeared to Tom's astonished gaze about the size of a small tea saucer. He clipped away industriously till his sheep was half done, when he found to his mortification that Jim and the other man had turned loose three each, and Bryce's man had nearly finished the fourth. Norwell lay down his shears to turn his sheep around so he could shear the other side. The impatient animal, knowing that time had elapsed more than sufficient for any operation a sheep was familiar with, objected to a continuance of the sitting, and raised himself at the same instant he raised the objection. He gave a sudden squirm, stiffened his hind legs on the platform, bowed his neck, made a corkscrew of himself, and with an agile bound went flying away before Tom could grab anything but the tattered fleece. A sheep's leg is a very fragile looking member, but the amount of energy it can exert is marvelous. With a few quick "sheep" jumps the alarmed animal freed itself from the hanging fleece, which was torn to shreds and draggled in the dirt. With some difficulty the victim was recaptured and put to the torture again, and finally the shearing was completed. The animal when turned loose was so spotted with patches that it was difficult to tell whether the greater part of the skin had been removed or left on. He resembled, somewhat, one of those freshly-skinned, boiled hams neatly decorated with pepper spots by the deft fingers of ladies, for the purpose of beguiling the coveted quarters from the pockets of visitors at a church fair. Mr. Bryce remarked that the skin remaining ran in spots a little, and perhaps a more regular distribution might have suited the sheep better, had it been consulted, but, on the whole, he supposed there might be worse jobs. At dinner time Norwell had his third sheep about half done. If he waited to finish he should be late for dinner at least half an

hour, so Bryce's man kindly finished the clip for him in a few minutes. At dinner May, who was waiting on the table, asked him:

"How many sheep did you shear, Mr. Norwell?"

"Two and a half."

"Two and a half! How did you get the half sheep?"

"Had help on that sheep." Norwell could give or take a joke as well as anybody, but something in his tone seemed to indicate that he preferred to talk in the presence of his lady love on some other subject, so no more was said about the day's work.

That afternoon all hands worked silently and with unremitting industry. No jesting or bantering was indulged in, because every minute must be put in to make a full day's work, for the forenoon start had been poor. Mr. Bryce was ready to talk or crack a joke at any time when he had leisure, but when he hired men for a day's work he expected a full day's work. His favorite argument was that men could not work and talk at the same time. The other men turned loose sheep at a rate which surprised Norwell. The peculiar bending posture necessary to hold the sheep in place was exceedingly tiresome. Norwell felt as if his back must certainly give way. He alternately stooped a little lower than was necessary, or raised a little higher than was convenient, in order to relieve the strain on his aching muscles. Between these two extremes there was a sort of dead point where it seemed as if nature could endure no longer. But he held out manfully, and began to get "the hang" of the business, as Jim expressed it. At night, as a result of all this torture, Tom had turned loose seven half-skinned, miserable victims, Jim had twenty-five done better, while Bryce's man had sheared thirty-seven as smooth as velvet, and scarcely a cut visible.

On the second day Norwell felt as if he had passed through a carpet beating establishment. After the violent exercise he had caught cold by sitting in the twilight in his shirt sleeves talking to the men. On first beginning work every movement was an excruciating torture. As he stooped over the struggling sheep it seemed that the muscles of his back must be giving way fiber by fiber, slowly but surely, like the strands of a loose rope subjected to a great strain, and that sooner or later they would part with a sudden snap. Then, like Captain Kidd, he swore a great oath that he was

not cut out for a farmer, only his oath was a powerful mental one, while the malediction of the celebrated pirate is said to have been very tangible.

There is a little story (doubtless as old as the fact that it illustrates) of a Teutonic parent who castigated his offspring severely for swearing. The boy, however, so stoutly asserted his innocence that the rod of discipline hung for a moment suspended in doubt. Though the Teutonic mind moves slowly, it exhibits no little fertility of resource. After a pause of painful interest to the party of the second part, Mine Herr evolved the following startling conclusion: "Vell, dot bin all right, Hans, if you tidn't schwear. But you tinks *tammit* now, an' I yoost vips you for dot." The logic of Mine Herr, though perhaps a trifle caustic, is based after all on a principle, for a sin of the imagination may be, in fact usually is, the parent of a sin in fact.

Norwell went home in no very good humor. He was disgusted with the world and with himself. He left Bryce's without saying good-night to May. He reached home half disposed to find fault with his sister for urging him to take the farm. He was in that disagreeable mood which most of us have sometimes when the whole world appears to be down on us, and we, ready to give as good as we get, are down on the whole world. At such times the quarrelsome man is itching to knock somebody down, the mean man goes home and acts ugly in his family, the bibulous man goes out and gets gloriously full, and the Christian—well, even a Christian's wife and children know when he is in a bad humor by the way he kicks the cat, for example. He forgot, in fact, like many men, he scarcely realized what the woman of the house had been doing. His muscles often ached, it is true. Hers ached daily as she cooked, washed, swept, baked, churned, fed the poultry, made beds, washed the dishes, polished the stove, hoed the garden, and so on through an interminable list of petty, vexatious details. Then Alice was only a sister. A wife might besides have had the care of several children to double her daily labors.

A neighbor had brought a letter that day from the post-office. Alice noticed that it bore the New York postmark, and that the address was in Chetta Ingledee's hand.

"Here is a letter for you, Tom." He opened the letter and read it in silence.

"Any special news from our New York friends?" she ventured to inquire.

"Nothing of interest." This was said in a tone which plainly indicated that he did not wish to be questioned on the subject. After a pause of a few minutes, she remarked:

"Tom, the chickens are not doing well shut up."

"Why not?"

"They have nearly stopped laying. Mrs. Smith says they will do no good in confinement."

"I wish Mrs. Smith would stay away from here if she has nothing else to do but put forty things into your head for me to attend to."

"Why it is nothing to Mrs. Smith," retorted Alice, in some surprise, "what we do with our chickens. I think myself if we want eggs or young chickens we must turn the hens out."

"They'll scratch up the garden."

"I will watch them."

"All right, I'll turn them out in the morning. But I want nothing more to do with them."

After that Alice had to run out fifty times per day, more or less, to "shoo" the chickens out of the garden. Then Tom got a big dog to guard it, but he created more havoc chasing the fowls over the beds than the chickens did themselves. So the dog was tied up and had to be fed three times per day.

June was a propitious month. The crops all gave most excellent promise. The corn, in spite of late planting, was looking first-rate. When they first began cultivating it Tom was afraid to plow close to the rows lest he might uproot the young plants. Jim told him to plow closer. By a dexterous manipulation of the cultivator Jim could throw the loose soil up around the corn, covering the young weeds completely, and the corn at once shot up in a strong stalk. Norwell's rows on the other hand showed a long green ribbon of weeds that nearly smothered the corn. It took him some days to master what seemed at first very easy. Under the propitious influences of a hot June sun and the most fertile of soils the corn grew so fast that it was no violent strain of the imagination to fancy one could see it grow. This dark-green, stately, semi-tropical plant puts to shame with its glowing beauty of blade, tassel and plume, the most pretentious exotic that ever languished under glass. And yet this prince of all plants, like a prophet, has little honor in its own country, being constantly associated with that unclean

beast, the hog. Inseparable they have gone into history together in the Southwestern dish known as "hog and hominy."

While things were going so well on the farm in general, Alice's department did not flourish. The neighboring women were selling eggs and butter enough to buy groceries for their families, calicoes, shoes, and in some instances "hickory" to make the men everyday shirts. The more thrifty farmers, however, bought their supplies in larger quantities to be paid for when the crops were sold.

Alice Norwell's schemes did not prosper. Her hens after much tribulation and effort had hatched about fifty chickens. But alas! a few wet days appeared simultaneous with the chicks, and half the unfortunate infants died with the gapes. This disease was checked with dry weather, and about twenty-five thrifty young fowls promised a reward for so much trouble. But there is a tide in the affairs of chickens as well as men. In fact, in this case there were two, and the second swept away the remnant left by the first. Suddenly the young chickens began to disappear at night. They were not large enough to tempt any one to steal them, hence there was an unsolved mystery about the matter somewhere. The dog was securely tied, but he barked and scratched a great deal in the night. Still the chickens disappeared regularly.

One day the former tenant of the place (who after all with characteristic inertia had not worked up his courage to the point of emigrating to Kansas) called, and on hearing the mystery of the missing chickens, pronounced it no mystery at all.

"I 'low the varmin has done took 'em."

"The varmin! What is that?" inquired Tom. The man stared in surprise at such astounding ignorance, then replied:

"Waal, all sorts o' wild truck, sich as skunks, an' 'possums, an' coon. I 'low mebbe this hyur tarnal critter was a mushrat. There's a right smart sprinklin' uv them this year. Let the dog loose at night."

That night "Bounce" was untied, and next morning a huge muskrat lay dead in the yard, the victim of over-confidence. Meantime all the young chickens were killed but one ungainly rooster. As an only child this bird assumed unusual privileges. He grew to be a great, clumsy, comical-looking thing, and had so much self-assurance that in a happy streak of facetiousness Jim Cain called him after a certain

statesman of national reputation and monumental brass. The "statesman" helped himself to the best there was going. He was an indefatigable forager in the kitchen, to Alice's great annoyance. As the solitary spring chicken remaining, he realized that certain immunities were his. He held such an important place in the family interests that, in a letter to her friend, Mrs. Wylie, who had not yet been able to visit the Norwells, Alice referred to this relic of her crop of spring chickens.

There was a fine crop of delicious cherries, and Alice determined to dry some after canning all she wished. With much labor she removed the pits from enough to cover a large wooden board, which she placed in the sun on the low roof of the woodshed. But the statesman, like his human namesake, could scent spoils even when they were invisible. With much effort, for he was a heavy bird, he flew and just missed landing on the roof. By holding on with his head to the eaves, while he flapped furiously with his wings and worked his long legs with marvelous rapidity, he at last surmounted the difficulty and reached the roof, where with business-like dispatch he devoured all the cherries unobserved. Alice had heard him fly up there and thought nothing about it. But her wrath was kindled at this crowning outrage, and she demanded the statesman's life. But courageous woman that she was, she could not bear to kill a chicken. The men admired the statesman's comic antics, and would not. The muskrats dared not, and so this solitary spring chicken lived and flourished.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A WESTERN CYCLONE.—HOW RAILROADS DIVIDE WITH THE FARMER.

It was midsummer and the weather was exceedingly hot. The corn had sprung up with wonderful rapidity and was now in tassel. The potatoes had grown till they had burst their hills open in wide cracks. All nature was in fact, as lavish of her wealth as she knew how to be in these regions of wonderful fertility.

One hot day late in July Norwell and his man were busy finishing the hay harvest. The sun blazed from a cloudless sky, and the heat was most oppressive on the prairies. There was not a breath of air stirring. The cattle sought the shade of the scrub-oak groves, where the dumb creatures waged incessant warfare with the remorseless, green-headed, blood-thirsty fly. The hogs rooted fresh places in the very dampest ground or plunged directly into the pools of the fast-failing creek where they were fortunate enough to have access to the stream. The birds were silent and inactive in the orchards and long osage hedges. The chickens moped sluggishly with drooping wings, the very picture of abject discomfort in this sweltering, stifling heat. The leaves on the trees hung with a slightly wilted, limp appearance, and inclined to expose their whitish under sides, unmoved by the stagnant atmosphere. The heat rose from the baked earth in a visible, faint-bluish vapor, that continually zig-zagged upward with a tremulous motion. The shirts of the laborers were as wet as if they had been dipped in water. The horses looked as if they had just emerged from a bath in the river.

Away off to the southwest there had hung all day low in the horizon a long bank of beautiful fleecy "thunderheads." These exquisite creations of the atmosphere looked like a fairy-land. The silvery, motionless masses of clouds, extending in a long line, sharply defined against the soft blue sky, looked strikingly like a chain of snow-capped mountains in the far distance. The fleecy piles rose high at irregular intervals like peaks, and had apparently all the stability of land. Their brilliant edges alone were too conspicuous to carry out the illusion fully. This delicate line looked like a burnished alloy of silver and gold, in which the gold showed plainest. To the poetic imagination there is no more romantic phenomenon of nature, than these piles of fantastic, ever-changing clouds.

Jim Cain, however lacking in poetic appreciation of this beautiful spectacle, was weather-wise enough to read in it a coming storm. Accustomed, as a natural consequence of his out door life, to observe closely the phenomena of nature, he knew all "signs," and prophesied a thunder storm in the afternoon. They labored diligently to finish the hay before rain came. About two o'clock in the afternoon the long line of clouds began to rise slowly and show beneath it a black band. In this dark belt an occasional flash of lightning was visible,

and before long the low rumbling of thunder could be heard. The black belt of clouds increased rapidly in width and filled the whole horizon in the west. Suddenly these apparently motionless, fleecy masses seemed driven rapidly onward by some force behind. Their color became an inky black as the still unobscured sun shone on them, and this black mass rapidly filled the western sky. Now the upper edge lost its fleecy outlines as it was pushed on by the inky masses behind. The sun was obscured and the heavens grew dark. The fore part of the advancing cloud now high in the heavens, began to look like a frightful dark pall with an irregular, fringing, lower edge torn into flying shreds. The inky belt below changed into a leaden gray, through which the lightning played incessantly and the thunder rolled in deafening peals. The frightened birds and animals sought refuge. It became almost as dark as night. Still there was not a breath of wind, or a drop of rain.

Suddenly a mighty fragment of the great ragged curtain seemed to drop toward the ground in the shape of an enormous funnel, which lengthened into a huge, rope-like body, that could be seen to revolve with frightful velocity. This mighty column with a great funnel-shaped top now appeared to shoot ahead of the other clouds, and move forward with the speed of a race horse. It was the dreaded cyclone on its awful career of devastation. People sought their cellars in terror, and waited for the worst. The black column sped swiftly past from west to east about two miles south of Norwell's. A horrible roaring noise accompanied its movements. It was not merely air in motion. It was some giant force striking a mighty blow. With the crash of a thousand hammers it struck buildings and instantly crushed them into kindling wood. It leaped from the ground only to bound down again with increased force. It was an electric discharge, a palpable thunder clap with the speed of a cannon ball and the strength of an earthquake. It was a black and nameless terror that bore death and desolation in its wanton career, and rivaled nature's deadliest scourges.

Houses and other buildings were wrenched from their foundations and scattered far and wide, till scarcely one beam remained fast to another. Trees were torn from their roots or twisted round and round till the trunk was one mass of long splinters. The water was lifted from the beds of streams in a body, and scattered to the winds. Curious

pranks were played by the cyclone. One house was turned round on its foundations, with little injury, till it faced the south instead of the east. A rail was driven endwise through a door leaving a clean round hole such as a cannon ball makes. Articles of furniture and apparel were dangling in the tops of trees. Scraps of paper were found at a distance of one hundred miles from the place whence they started. Fortunately this track of devastation was only about half a mile wide. But the cyclone had left desolation and mourning behind it. Several people had been killed outright, and a greater number injured.

After the excitement caused by the cyclone had subsided, things settled again into the quiet routine of farm life. May Bryce had obtained Tom's consent that she might inform her parents of their engagement with the understanding that he wished it for the present to remain a secret. Alice was not to know till Tom succeeded in making money, a notion which he persisted in, despite of its absurdity. Mr. Bryce was pleased with the prospect of having Norwell for a son-in-law. He thought him a very "likely" young man. Mrs. Bryce was scarcely pleased, either with May's choice or the manner in which the choice was made, but she sensibly acquiesced, realizing that opposition then could be prolific only of harm.

May was now supremely happy, the happiest she had ever been, the fear of offending her parents having been removed. She had Tom all to herself here, and with the sense of exclusive possession, the old morbid fear of Chetta Ingledee's power died out, or at least slumbered. Her health improved. Her rosy cheeks assumed a natural hue. Her old time buoyancy returned. Norwell thought she grew more bewitching every day. Still, he was dimly cognizant of a feeling that the companionship of this trusting girl with her country manners, did not satisfy him, and he invariably on such occasions compared her with Chetta Ingledee, whose prompt decisiveness of character was more to his notion.

Alice was not to be deceived. She had told her brother of her engagement to Wilson at an early date. But he gave no sign of making the confidence mutual. She had for a long time known that May loved him dearly, and suspected that there was an understanding between them. As time wore on she had seen several of those letters bearing the New York postmark. Alice Norwell knew perfectly well that most

men are capable of a little flirtation sometime in their lives. She suspected Tom and grew indignant at the thought of his playing with the feelings of a confiding, inexperienced girl. As for Chetta, well, she thought that young lady was abundantly able to take care of herself. She determined to speak to Tom, and, one evening when Jim was away, broached the subject.

"Tom, will you be over at Bryce's any time this week?"

"Yes, probably. Why?"

"I want to send May the last magazine."

"I'll take it over."

"I suppose you might read the stories to her."

"I might, if she liked it."

"Tom, I think she would like it." Tom made no reply to this bid for his confidence.

"May is a good girl, Tom. She will make a lovely woman."

"Of course she will. Who said she wouldn't?"

"You must be getting quite well acquainted with her."

"Oh, so, so."

"I suppose you have thought this matter over, Tom. You are aware that when a single gentleman pays continued attention to a young lady something is usually expected to come of it."

"People have been talking, eh? Well, let them. Mr. and Mrs. Bryce are the only ones who have any right to discuss the subject." This hint did not deter Alice.

"Perhaps they might say something, too, if they knew some things. Tom, how can you pay such attentions to Miss Bryce, and continue your relations with Miss Ingledee at the same time?"

"What relations? What do you mean?"

"I mean those letters."

"That's nothing, only old friendship."

"Then it should be understood by all. Otherwise, your course is not honorable." This nettled him. He was determined to end these interferences on the part of his sister.

"Alice, you seem to think I need a guardian by the way you advise me. You think we should have been better off if I had taken your advice oftener. I admit that. But I am no boy. In the selection of my friends I must reserve the right to do as I please. I can manage those affairs myself."

"Very well, Tom. I only stated how it looked to others. You, of course, must decide for yourself. Think it over well and do what is right."

"You're afraid I'll do something that isn't right, are you?"

"No, not that, Tom. But it is well to review our own actions occasionally." He was too well bred to get angry and quarrel with his sister, and she had too much good sense to carry matters too far at first. Still, there was some ill-feeling on his part and a deep indignation on hers. Nothing more was said on the subject. Alice would have felt a little guilty to repeat this conversation to May; besides, it would not have been safe, as she did not know just how matters stood between her brother and May or Chetta. Tom, however, ordered the postmaster to deliver his letters only to himself. A few days after this conversation, Alice was at Prairie Grande and called, as usual, at the postoffice for their mail. The postmaster handed her two or three papers and a letter for herself through the little window.

"Is there nothing more?"

"No."

"Nothing for my brother?"

"Yes, here is a letter for Thomas Norwell, but I have orders not to deliver his mail to anybody but himself."

"I will take that. It is for my brother."

"I have orders not to let it go, Miss Norwell."

"But I am his sister."

"That makes no difference. I have strict orders not to deliver his mail to any one else."

Alice turned away from the little window, inexpressibly pained. She understood why the mail was refused to her. Her brother, who had been her playmate and almost her second self all their lives, was now estranged beyond reconciliation. He had even allowed a stranger to become cognizant of the alienation. She harbored no bitter feelings. She still loved that brother, and would make any required sacrifice for him because he was her brother, but the old mutual trust and affection was a thing of the past, never more to return.

Autumn came, and with it the gorgeous Indian summer. The weather was delightful, the roads good, and life in the country at its very best in this most enjoyable of all seasons. There was now more leisure. There was not the continual hurry to get a crop into the ground, or to get it off. Corn husking had not begun, and the fall seeding proceeded leisurely. Country fairs were in full operation. Prize bullocks and prize pumpkins abounded, while rosy-cheeked country

girls in Sunday "rig," with their "fellers" at their sides, took in the fair and the circus, consuming betimes vast quantities of insipid lemonade, popcorn, candy and peanuts.

Apple cuttings, too, were popular. At these gatherings from forty to fifty young folks, and some old ones assemble. The evening is passed in hilarious enjoyment, paring and coring apples, cracking ancient rural jokes, and sparking on the sly incessantly. The apple paring continues until about ten o'clock, when the debris of cores and rinds is cleaned up, which operation is accompanied by a great deal of boisterous fun. Many a pretty damsel finds her fair neck encircled by a rather uncomfortable necklace of long apple rinds clammy with juice. Cores and even whole apples fly across the room. And occasionally some gay youth who, perhaps, had similar designs on some one else in the room, receives such a flying missile full in the optic, filling that necessary organ with mingled cider and tears, to the utter discomfiture of its owner.

After the house has been "rid up," the guests are regaled with cookies, enormous wedges of cake and quarter sections of pies. After refreshments the "playing" begins, for the old-fashioned plays still linger in the country, and perhaps will endure for all time in spite of the steam engine, the telegraph, the telephone and the daily newspaper. "Under the Juniper tree," "Postoffice," "Spat 'em out," and "Copenhagen" are great favorites. Few games are popular, which require any particular literary culture. Copenhagen, which is so well known as to need no description, is in some localities very popular because the young folks, more ingenuous than their city bred cousins, tacitly admit that osculation is pleasant. It is amusing, and withal a lesson in social economy to see some great strapping country girl "tag" the most modest and best looking boy in the company, and then fly round the circle like mad to evade the forfeit of a kiss, all the time secretly hoping he will overtake her. On the other hand some of the young men persistently display their want of gallantry and gentlemanly instinct by slighting the homely girls. This species of young man, however, is not confined to the country. He is found everywhere, and there is no more conceited, disagreeable little puppy in existence. These rural gatherings were a constant source of interest to Alice Norwell, who contrasted the hearty, though at times rude enjoyment found here, with its antipodes, the artificial, elegant society of New

York. Tom enjoyed them with a thorough zest, though he never could quite enter into the spirit of the country dance. Next to a cyclone or a moderate earthquake, this saltatory amusement is most unsettling to the house in which it takes place.

One disagreeable autumn day Deacon Brown called to see Norwell on some business. Tom was absent, and the Deacon seemed disposed to await his return. It was a wet day, one of the first of the fall, and the visitor, who could do nothing at home, ensconsed himself by the kitchen stove. Alice was baking bread, and when the Deacon got into the corner by the wood box she found it rather close quarters, when she wished to look at the bread, or put wood in the stove. She was obliged to edge in sidewise past his shins to get at the wood which was needed every few minutes. The Deacon sat, unconcerned after the first trial, for he saw the thing could be done, and so troubled himself no more about it. To her horror he deliberately spit in the woodbox among the wood. The Deacon was incurably addicted to this habit of ptyalism, which becomes inveterate, and is so disagreeable. Our English cousins very properly denounce this unclean practice, which they call an Americanism. With their customary superficial knowledge of this country, they think the American spits because he finds pleasure in it. They overlook the causes of the disgusting habit. One is the filthy use of tobacco; another important one is the improper use of very hearty food, particularly such as salt pork and greasy compounds which injure the digestive organs. The first is a vice, the second a sin of ignorance. A third very important reason is the frequent catarrhs caused by the sudden and extraordinary changes of temperature incident to our climate. Certainly, even an Englishman will not hold us responsible for the last. As a retort concerning the second reason, it may be said that the average European has no cause for spitting after partaking of his scanty, uninviting, husky repast which would be scorned by the laborer's family in America.

Every few minutes the Deacon would clear his throat and discharge a little spray of spittle into the wood box. Alice detested this habit even beyond the feeling of the majority of women on the subject. But Deacon Brown was apparently so utterly unconscious of this nuisance, and he was, moreover, such a "light" in the community that she was obliged to entertain her guest as best she could, and conceal her feelings.

Next time she put wood in the stove, however, she took the sticks up with an old pair of tongs, and, with much difficulty, got them into the stove.

"I guess you be right smart of a cook, Miss Norwell," said the Deacon, unconscious of the hint so delicately conveyed by the tongs.

"Oh, no, Mr. Brown, I think I'm a very indifferent one."

"Naow don't talk so. That's the way with all these women folks. My wife is always runnin' daown her biscuits when we have company, an' she knows all the time she makes the best biscuits in the kyounty. Of course, your mother taught you all sorts o' housework."

"No, I never did any work when I was a girl."

"Naow that's mighty queer, fur most of the Eastern women know all about housework. They did in Connecticut where I was brought up, any way, but then I guess New York City's different, come to think."

At length Tom and Jim Cain returned. Deacon Brown was invited to dinner, and accepted the invitation. Then he staid nearly all the afternoon, as the rain still continued. After awhile Mr. Bryce dropped in to have a friendly chat. The men talked about the crops and the prospects of the farmers' making money at present prices. The corn crop had been excellent. Norwell estimated that he would have about three thousand bushels to sell and about one thousand bushels of potatoes, besides oats and some hay. At forty cents for corn, the price it was then bringing, and thirty cents for potatoes, he figured that he would have left at the end of the year some six hundred dollars. This was not much after all his expectations, but it was something left besides having a living, and further, it was much more than a farmer usually makes with the same outlay.

But Deacon Brown, who had acquired a competence by a long life of careful economy and judicious management, had some statistics that played havoc with Tom's figures. The Deacon kept posted closely on the markets, and on freight rates. Somehow, he always managed to dispose of all his surplus at the right time, at least, everybody said so.

"Norwell, you can't figure on the Chicago markets for your corn. It has ruled there at forty cents all fall. Naow it has got up to forty-five, but we get no benefit from it."

"Why not?"

"Well, the railroad company advanced freight rates on the first.* So you see they take the benefit of the rise."

"Just as they have done many times before," said Mr. Bryce. "You see we have no competition in this section."

"Are you sure of that rise in rates, Deacon?"

"I be; the new tariff went into effect last Monday."

"How about potatoes?"

"They're wuss yet. You see, because we've no competition here, they charge jest what they please. Potatoes ought by all kalkilation to be, jest what you figger, thirty cents. Under the new tariff they bring twenty-five cents here, and the company will take what's left."

"And that in the face of the fact that this county voted the railroad company two hundred thousand dollars in bonds to help build its line," added Mr. Bryce. Here was about one hundred and fifty dollars taken from one crop and fifty from another, in all one-third of the farmer's gross income. Who was the better for it? The consumer paid as much as ever for everything he used. The railroad company pocketed the difference under the startling new principle lately laid down by certain millionaire thieves, "Charge all the tariff will bear."

"It is an outrage," said Norwell.

"So it is," replied Mr. Bryce. "But what are you going to do about it? We're expecting it here every year, and are getting used to it."

"I'll not stand it. I'll quit farming first."

"But they're bound to catch you in some shape, no matter what avocation you pursue. Their nefarious transactions are a tax on the whole people. Did you read Congressman Wike's great speech on the railroad question?"

"No."

"You read it. Every man in the whole country ought to read that speech. He says there are four railroad men in this country who have the power, whenever they choose, to take one thousand millions of dollars out of the pockets of the American people by charging excessive rates on freight.† And the public can't help itself. You see these big corporations have no soul, but plenty of brains. They defy the law and ignore public opinion."

"Some day there will be a terrible reckoning for all this."

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*Note 10.—Arbitrary changes of rates.

†Note 11.—Arbitrary powers exercised by great corporations.

"And it will be no tea party either, I guess," added the Deacon.

"It will not be [illegible], gentlemen, not very soon," rejoined Mr. Bryce.

"The American people grin an' bear a thing till they can't stand it any longer before they do anything. They're fast enough generally," reflected the Deacon, "but powerful slow on some things. When they do git started they hold a few meetin's, appint some committees, and sit down to see what'll happen. Then the law-breakers, ballot-box stuffers and big monopolists laugh in their sleeves at the fun."

"You do not think, Mr. Bryce, that all railroad men are dishonest, do you?" asked Alice, who was now interested in the conversation.

"I don't mean the real railroadmen at all. The engineers and brakemen, and all the men who work, earn every cent they get. Nor do I mean honest stockholders. I mean the rascals who have made millions by swindling both the public and the company whose officers they are, and whose interests they are in duty bound to protect."

"The men," said Tom, "who buy votes to control legislatures in their favor, who wreck railroads by crooked work in the management, and then buy the property up for a song."

"But," continued Alice, who looked only at the exterior of this great question, having given it no thought, "railroads are a necessity. I am sure they must do more good than harm."

"They be a necessity, of course they be. Nobody wants to do without 'em," replied the Deacon, "though I'd never vote 'em any more bonds if I lived a thousand years."

"But the fact that they are a necessity," said Tom, "doesn't justify the arrogant, systematic extortion and disregard of right practiced of late years by a few great railway kings whom the people have made."

"To be sure it doesn't," continued Mr. Bryce.

Nearly every great evil in this world masks itself behind some good; because a thing is good we should not be obliged to take with it a notorious wrong that has slily masked itself behind the good. Rather than let such men corrupt the politics of this country, and control its policy, as they now rule with an iron hand many of its great industries; it were better if every mile of railroad in this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Gulf to the Lakes, were destroyed for-

ever. Stage coaches and tallow candles, with political purity and right triumphant, are preferable to the merciless rule of uncrowned money kings, after they have once closed every avenue by which their victims may escape. We feel these things comparatively little yet, except in certain sections, because we have a vast domain of free land, and the people are not cramped. Food is cheap and labor plenty. But some day, not far distant, we shall, if these centralizing influences of money remain uncontrolled, feel the weight of an Iron Crown of steel rails bound by stringing wires as grievous as any ever borne by any people in the Middle Ages. It is coming, and we may as well face the music.

At this point the discussion was interrupted by the announcement that supper was ready.

CHAPTER XL.

IN WHICH TOM NORWELL CONCLUDES THAT FARMING IS NOT HIGHLY REMUNERATIVE; AND MESSRS. LEMMING & MIRIAM CONCOCT THEIR GREATEST MONEY-MAKING SCHEME.

Things turned out precisely as Deacon Brown had figured it. When Norwell finished hauling his crops to town, after paying one-third farm rent, and Jim's salary of eighteen dollars per month, he found, that instead of one thousand dollars or even the six hundred he last figured on, he had just three hundred dollars left. Jim thought this a big pile of money, and some of the neighbors, who, one year with another, perhaps did not save over one hundred dollars per year, congratulated Norwell on what a pile of money he must have made. The three hundred dollars would not more than pay for the team he had bought, and the farm implements, to say nothing of paying any hire for an extra team he had of Mr. Bryce during a large part of the summer.

Norwell was thoroughly disheartened and disgusted with farming. He could have saved as much on his salary with no risk whatever, while Alice would have been much better off teaching without having to undergo all this drudgery. He consulted with her and they decided it best to quit, as he could

have his old place in Chicago again, if he chose, at the beginning of the year. Alice had no advice to offer concerning the future. She felt herself largely responsible for their coming to the country. The results had not been what they hoped. Now she was willing to acquiesce in her brother's wishes. She dreaded the influences of the grain business in Chicago, but there was nothing else to do apparently, and it was useless to make any further struggle against adverse fortune. So it was all settled that they should give up the farm.

That evening Tom and Alice went over to Bryces to see what arrangements it would be best to make about selling the team. Jacob Bryce was a man known to everybody for ten miles around. He owned a thousand acres of land well improved and stocked. This was all the result of his own industry and good management, aided by an unusually intelligent, faithful wife. Together they had come to this new country from New England, with only one hundred dollars all told, thirty years before. Their thrifty habits had not, however, made the Bryces grasping or stingy. On the contrary, they were known as the most generous people in the country. They had only one child to inherit their property. Their other, a son, had shouldered his musket during the dark days of the war, and bidding his father, mother, and little, flaxen-haired sister adieu, had gone to the front, like thousands of others, never to return. There was now no need to pile up more wealth; there was ample for one. Many a poor man had been helped out of his difficulties and put on his legs by Mr. Bryce's timely assistance. Many a needy family in the dead of winter received from the Bryces a sack of flour, a bushel of potatoes, or a "flitch" of pork. Occasionally Mr. Bryce was deceived in those whom he trusted. This was only natural, while human nature remains as it is. But he always consoled himself with the reflection, that it is better to make a mistake in favor of humanity than on the other side. Mr. Bryce was at Prairie Grande that evening, and was unusually late getting home, as the roads were almost bottomless now in the latter part of November. Alice went to the kitchen, where Mrs. Bryce was at work while waiting supper for her husband. Tom and May had the sitting room to themselves. May was always delighted when Tom was near, as became a woman whose whole soul was possessed by a deep, unchanging love that amounted to devotion.

"I looked for you last night, Tom," she said, almost re-

proachfully. "Just think! It's a whole week since you have been here."

"I couldn't get away, little girl; I expected to, but the Smiths came over to stay till bedtime."

"I'll forgive you this time, you naughty boy, if you promise never to do so again."

"Come, Prairie Blossom, don't be too hard on a fellow. I couldn't regulate the movements of the Smith family. But it could not matter a great deal whether I came last night or to-night. And then girls act as if they thought so much of their beaux, just as if they were dying for them. Don't you think they play off a little sometimes?" May sat a moment in silence, then she answered:

"Tom, do you love me?"

"What a question, May! Haven't I told you so a hundred times?" But he was a little uneasy. Instantly he thought of Chetta Ingledee, and that he was guilty of deception. Little by little, step by step, before he realized his course, he had been drawn into a position which was a discredit to an honorable gentleman. He knew that this girl, who was ignorant of the deceptions of the great world, had given him her whole heart, and since he had come here to her home, her whole trust. It would be a most cruel act to deceive her. He was about on the point of making the only noble resolution possible under the circumstances, namely, to write to Chetta saying that they could only be strangers henceforth, and return all her letters. Though he felt that this girl was not the helpmeet for him which he had hoped, he was in honor bound to marry her, and justify her deep affection and boundless trust. His word, which is a gentleman's honor, was pledged.

"I know you have told me so. I ought not to have asked perhaps. Please forgive me. But I was thinking, Tom, that love is something sacred. As there is only one true God, so true love can have only one object." She seemed to have read his thoughts, and he was startled. He could only reply:

"Yes, doubtless you are right, May."

"Tom," she continued very earnestly, "do you know, sometimes I think I could not live without you?"

This remark scarcely pleased him. He could not look at love in any such light. It was far beyond anything he had ever felt, beyond his capacity for feeling. He did not believe in love that could not survive the deprivation of its object.

"May," he replied in a rather argumentative tone, "don't you think you are growing a trifle sentimental?"

"No Tom, I mean it. I could not live without you."

"Pshaw! That is little short of romantic nonsense, if you will excuse me for speaking so plainly. We must look at things in a more practical light. It is not an agreeable idea, but then death, for example, might separate us at any time. Then, however hard it might be at first, the survivor, after a time, would find life endurable, and eventually, enjoyable. It might be a duty to live regardless of our own wishes."

But notwithstanding his own logic, Norwell felt uncomfortable and tried to change the subject. In the first place, this declaration of such absorbing love reflected indirectly on his own feelings, which were as the shallow banks of Newfoundland to the deep soundings of the Atlantic, compared with hers. He did not believe in this supernal love that is unable to live unless constantly feeding on itself. He thought it was a sickly sentiment, instead of a deep emotion, and while he never for an instant thought his betrothed guilty of deceit, he thought she scarcely realized the extent of the hyperbole in which she was indulging.

But May was not mistaken. This romantic country girl had an intellect as vigorous as his own, and of a far more delicate comprehension on such subjects. There was a deep and dreadful significance in her words, which she fully understood but could never explain to him, nor even to her own mother. For a long time, even before her first visit to New York, May Bryce had been at times shadowed by a flitting dread that her life would be a short one. Her mother's mother had been a victim of that king of terrors, consumption. A maternal uncle had died of the same disease, and her parents had always spoken of it as a malady which left its victim no hope. As a girl, May had, at times, thought of the awful situation of a person doomed to this loathsome, living decay. Her vivid imagination had heightened the horrors of such a situation, if that were possible. Such a death, though painless, is truly dreadful. Compared with it the fate of Prometheus chained to the cold rocks and torn by ravenous birds, was almost to be envied, for his vital powers were constantly renewed by an active, life-giving principle. The loathsomeness of decay was spared him. Consumption and leprosy are twin horrors. May had carefully read excellent medical authorities on the subject. Her father bought such

books because he thought it better to read them and learn something about taking care of the body in trifling disorders, than to run for the doctor to treat every petty ailment.

May would not cause her parents anxiety by disclosing fears which might be utterly groundless. Sometimes she laughed at those fears and thought nothing of them for months. But they always returned. Then she consulted the family physician, enjoining strict secrecy. He quieted her fears, but with the usual sphinx-like demeanor of the profession, cautioned her to be careful of her health. The doctor's opinion somewhat reassured her. She derived no consolation from the commonly accepted belief that consumptive patients are always hopeful. It was apparently opposed to common sense. She saw no reason why the consumptive doomed to a sure death should be hopeful any more than the man who is bitten by a cobra, could sit and calmly watch the deadly poison slowly creeping toward his heart beneath the skin. If this is the fault of doctors who lack the moral courage to be candid, it is a cruel and unprofitable deception. May Bryce reasoned beyond this popular hallucination and argued that she would listen to reason rather than hope.

But she divulged none of these thoughts to her lover. It was unwise to alarm him unnecessarily. The excitement of her visit to New York and the want of her usual, abundant open-air exercise had told on her health, though she was scarcely aware of it till it was all over, and the reaction came in her country home. Then Tom's coming brought with it a reassurance of his continued love, and the fact that she now had him all to herself, free from the anxieties of any rivalry, made that summer one of supreme happiness to her. The flush of health returned to her cheeks and her morbid fears gradually slumbered. Thus, it was no sickly sentiment in May Bryce to tell her lover that he was life to her. Happiness is the mainstay of health.

Norwell now informed May of his intention to return to Chicago. As Alice had already told her that their moving was probable, May was not surprised. She was sorry to have them go, but did not doubt that it was for the best. Then as Tom promised her that he would run out on a visit frequently she was satisfied with the change. She had a slight hope that he might ask her to name the day, but he was silent on that subject.

Mr. Bryce came home finally, and the men had a long

talk. Bryce kindly agreed to take Norwell's team and implements and assume payment for them. To Norwell's inquiry as to whether he was not permitting too much in his friend who offered to do this, Mr. Bryce had answered:

"Norwell, I can turn them into money eventually much better than you can. The horses will bring a good price in the spring."

"Mr. Bryce, I don't want you to lose on them."

"You certainly would lose by putting them on the market now, Mr. Norwell. We will consider that all settled."

So everything was arranged. The Norwells made a sale and disposed of their cows, the hay and grain, and the household goods. The poultry was sold at town and with it ended Alice's great expectations in that line. Only the statesman was reserved. He had grown into a huge plump bird and had lost none of the awkwardness and naive impudence which first suggested his name, which from motives of delicacy has been omitted in this history. The family affection for him in spite of his faults, was such that it was decided not to expose him to the scrutiny of an unsympathizing public in a market place. He was slaughtered at home and formed the basis of a toothsome pot-pie.

One evening near holidays Jim Cain, who no longer lived with the Norwells, came to spend the evening with them. A pleasant time was had over cider and apples. Jim had been a faithful hand and especially willing to help Alice at churning, and other work when he had any spare time. Though he did justice to the cider and apples, Jim scarcely appeared to have his usual flow of good spirits. As the time approached for him to go he seemed nervous and fidgety, a condition in which he had never been seen by them before. Norwell accompanied him to the gate as he started for home, and when the two were alone together the cause of the man's uneasiness was soon made apparent.

"Mr. Norwell, I hate to ask you, I'd a heap ruther take a kickin' than ask you, but could you loan me twenty-five dollars for awhile?"

"Why, what's the matter, Jim?" exclaimed Norwell in surprise. "Where are your wages?"

"I've been a danged fool. That's what's the matter. I've lost a thunderin' pile of money."

"Lost it! How much?"

"Fifty dollars clean cash, all gone. Now I am strapped

and I owe my sister who lives in town, twenty-five dollars. They have had hard luck, and her man has been sick nearly all summer, and I've got to pay it."

"But where is your money? How did you lose it?"

"You remember that firm in Chicago, Lemming & Miriam, who advertised to invest money where it would pay such big returns?"

"Yes."

"Well, I dropped it there."

"That was such a bare-faced swindle you ought to have known better, Jim."

"Mebbe I ought, but, Mr. Norwell, country people don't know as well about these swindles as you town people. Jack Bundy down to Prairie Grande, had one hundred dollars in and it doubled itself in a month. Then he drawed out. But when that word got out a lot more fellers went in. I never got a red cent and never will now; the whole darn thing has gone up an' there's the maddest set o' boys in town that you ever saw."

"I am very sorry, Jim; you worked too hard for your money to lose it that way."

"So I did," replied Jim. "I thought I'd get ahead a little this year, but everything goes agin me: But I must have the money if I can get it. I borrowed it to get clothes with and now I can't see my sister's children going without clothes."

"All right, Jim, say no more. You shall have it." Norwell as he said this thought how little would be left by the time he and Alice had got finally settled in Chicago.

"Norwell, before you give it I want to tell you I can't pay you soon. I get only ten dollars per month and board, where I am for the winter months. I can't pay you before three months."

"Jim, you shall have it on those terms. I shall need it myself then. Be careful in the future where you put your money. Take no chances with such men."

The advertisement which had caused all this trouble, not only to Jim Cain, but to thousands of others, all over the United States, had appeared regularly in hundreds of newspapers, for months. It illustrates a system of financiering which has been tried many times heretofore under various guises, and doubtless will be tried many times more. Here it is. A perusal may repay the reader. Look out for any man

who offers one dollar's worth for fifty cents. He is a liar, and will prove a thief if you give him a chance.

INVESTMENTS.

LEMMING & MIRIAM.— Dealers in stocks, bonds, and all kinds of securities. Members of the Chicago Grain Exchange. Money placed for investment in our FUND W makes sometimes as high as 500 per cent. a month. We guarantee fifty per cent. per month. Returns made monthly in cash, or profits reinvested on the same plan at investor's option. We have perfected a system of operating whereby all moneys are being turned over daily, thus securing enormous profits in consequence of our superior facilities for taking advantage of the fluctuations of the market. Thousands are now investing in FUND W, which promises to be one of the most successful methods of money-making that we have ever tried. Any sum from five dollars upward, may be placed in FUND W for investment, thus giving the poor a chance to reap golden returns along with the rich. Address, LEMMING & MIRIAM, 10 Corn Exchange Place, Chicago, Ill.

It would seem at first sight that no person with a modicum of common sense could be entrapped by so bare-faced a swindle, however cunningly it may have been worded. But human credulity is as boundless as the ocean. When coupled with avarice, which is still more universal and powerful, the two combined produce a degree of gullibility almost beyond belief. Lemming & Miriam did not lie when they said thousands were investing in FUND W. And when they added with a delightful naivete that no such method of money-making had yet been tried by them, they told a striking truth if the statement was properly interpreted. It was the best scheme for them that they had ever tried.

It was estimated that the receipts from the FUND W. swindle for a few months were at least three-quarters of a million dollars, possibly a million. This enterprising firm also told the truth when they stated that it gave the poor man a chance with the rich. The legal proceedings during the trial of Lemming & Miriam on the charge of employing the United States mails for fraudulent purposes, developed the fact that investments ranged from the smallest sum receivable up to forty thousand dollars in the case of one victim. The first investor in a town usually received a hand-

some cash dividend, which was paid out of the daily receipts from investors. No pretense was made of investing the money in any way. Such was the infatuation of the public that, incredible as it may appear, letters stamped "fraudulent" by the postoffice of Chicago and returned to the writers, were at once remailed to Lemming & Miriam. Some of their dupes even promised to back the swindlers in their contest with the government. When an enormous sum of money had accumulated and it was evident that the scheme would not work much longer, owing to frequent complaints received by the police authorities and daily papers, Lemming & Miriam sent out circulars to all their customers saying that they had made heavy investments which unfortunately had turned out badly and that the money in consequence was all lost.

For this scoundrelly and unparalleled swindle Lemming & Miriam were sentenced to pay a nominal fine and to one year's imprisonment in the county jail. After a few months' confinement, during which their friends were allowed to furnish them every luxury that money would procure, these two scoundrels were pardoned by the President of the United States, who doubtless was ignorant of the main facts. He could only judge from the representations of friends of the prisoners, and from the recommendation of the United States district judge of the district in which the trial occurred. This Judge's recommendation was, according to the statements of the press, informal, not being indorsed by the United States Attorney who prosecuted the case, as was customary. It was based, we will charitably suppose, on a mistaken notion of clemency on the part of the judge. Great was the indignation of the respectable people of Chicago and the country at large. There was good reason for believing that a ring of disreputable politicians managed the whole business of procuring the pardon for political purposes, and that citizens of Chicago of wealth and *apparent* respectability worked actively for Lemming & Miriam, because they had been or were at that time engaged in similar disreputable schemes.

Have not Americans cause to blush for all this? When judges and the highest officials of the land are so indifferent to the public welfare as to turn such dangerous criminals free upon an unprotected community, is it not time to inquire whether there is not something very rotten in the machinery of State? Judges should remember that they are not elected

to hear lawyers wrangle for weeks over hair-splitting legal quibbles; nor are they placed on the bench to seek diligently for knot holes through which criminals may escape justice. The bench should not forget that the community may need protection just as urgently as the prisoner. It is a safe principle of law that where any doubt exists as to the guilt of a prisoner, the accused shall have the benefit of the doubt. When only a legal technicality is at issue and the guilt of the prisoner is notorious and beyond question, why not let the community have the benefit of the doubt?

To the foreigner, if perchance any such may peruse these pages, it may seem as if a large majority of the American people were fools, and the remainder knaves. Let him not be too hasty in his judgment. America is a land of opportunities. In Europe the poor expect to remain poor. It is their hard lot from which there is no escape. In America, scarcely any man may be found who does not hope to better his condition. This restless activity and universal opportunity must in the very nature of things be taken advantage of by the dishonest to ply their swindling schemes. While speculative gambling is only too common it is not yet a national vice. Swindles abound while the American people remain honest but supine.

But can we long remain honest and by our silence virtually sanction dishonesty? "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Has American honor sunk so low that it is satisfied to consort with roguery, peculation and downright robbery? National honor is national life, and the people who are willing to give up their good name are on the high road to national extinction. Shall the examples of Persia, Greece, Rome, Carthage and the Saracenic Empire be lost in the light of the nineteenth century?

CHAPTER XLI.

WHICH CONTAINS BOTH GOOD AND BAD REPORT OF FAMILIAR FRIENDS.—LUCK VS. LOVE.—THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN LUCK, NOTHING NEW IN LOVE.

The Norwells returned to Chicago. Alice took her old place in the Young Ladies' school, and Tom resumed his clerkship with the grain commission firm. They both soon settled down into their accustomed daily routine and all went well. They attended regularly a prominent church on the West Side, and had no difficulty in forming numerous pleasant acquaintances. In this respect Chicago is perhaps more distinctively democratic than any other metropolis in the world. She has as yet no aristocracy of wealth or tradition. Doubtless in time she will have both, especially the former, which is already rapidly building a social rampart of money bags. At present respectability is the only password required to admit strangers into the homes of a majority of the best people. May it ever remain so, for the two most universal lines of caste distinction, blood and money, are both based on absurdly false principles. Any rusty old vessel will hold blue blood, and any fool can jingle the eagles that have been placed in his pockets.

The Norwells made many good friends of the quieter sort, and the winter passed very pleasantly. Both brother and sister felt more than they showed, the difficulty experienced by those who have been rich, in adjusting their expenditures to a small income. A great city affords many opportunities for making money to those who know how, but for each way of acquiring there are ten ways of spending. Both firmly resolved to save something, but they no longer saved in common. In fact, there were now few confidences between them. Both felt that on certain points they could never agree. Alice could not coincide in her brother's false views concerning the acquisition of wealth. Far better honest poverty than dishonest wealth, she told him. She disapproved of his reckless speculative mania and of his manage-

ment of his love affairs. But she sensibly realized the uselessness of continuing a losing struggle with him, which could result only in complete alienation.

It was not strange that this brother and sister disagreed. Although the ties of relationship were so close, two persons could scarcely have been more different in character. The brother was frank, generous and good-natured as a rule, but inclined to be stubborn, where he fancied his own peculiar rights were invaded, as easy-going people often are. The sister was more reserved with the mass of her acquaintance. She made friends more reluctantly, but made them to keep. She was kind-hearted but of quicker temper, and was ready to yield a point instantly when she saw she was wrong. Her delicate perceptions of right and wrong were much finer than his. She weighed carefully her thoughts and actions and instantly retraced a course as soon as she saw it might possibly lead in the wrong direction. He, on the contrary, temporized when he should have taken a decided stand. He did this partly because he lacked the moral courage to face consequences, and partly because his less acute perceptions of right and wrong often failed to place things in their proper light with relation to duty. Notably this was true of his correspondence with Chetta Ingledee while engaged to May Bryce. Nothing was further from his purposes than to deceive either of these women, and yet his careless good nature had allowed him to drift into a false position which threatened the most serious consequences to all concerned. Alice clearly saw this with a dread that amounted almost to horror. He failed to realize it fully because he allowed his mind to drift away from consequences, trusting that somehow all would be well in the end.

The long, severe winter passed into the usual chilling spring weather when the great refrigerator, Lake Michigan, for days and weeks steadily pours a current of cold air over the city, with brief interruptions of warm winds from the south, that only makes the succeeding cold more disagreeable. Norwell, by careful economy and by collecting a few little odd sums still due him in New York and at Prairie Grande, had got together five hundred dollars in clean cash. He had not told Alice about this money nor did he reveal his plans, for he knew that she would oppose them. A business depression which had lasted for some time was thought to be at an end. A general activity began to prevail in all depart-

ments of commerce and manufacturing. Norwell thought this was his long hoped for opportunity to make money. Wheat had for months been fluctuating in the neighborhood of eighty cents per bushel. One morning, as Norwell and Wylie were going down town on a Madison street car, the former broached the subject uppermost in his mind.

"Wylie, what do you think of wheat?"

"I think it offers a first-rate chance for investment, but I never take any of these chances. When I entered the office I made a solemn resolution never to speculate under any circumstances. I have kept my word. I have seen hundreds of men go in confidently and lose every cent they put in."

"But some make large sums."

"For a time, but they all come out the same way sooner or later."

"I'm going to risk a little deal in wheat, any way."

"Every man to his notion, Norwell. But if I were you I should not risk much."

Tom Norwell never did anything by halves, and his very audacity now proved to be his fortune. With his five hundred dollars he bought fifty thousand bushels of wheat on a margin of one cent per bushel. At the close of business that day wheat had risen one cent, and his profits were five hundred dollars. On the second day he closed the deal with a profit of one thousand dollars, and immediately invested the fifteen hundred dollars again, buying one hundred and fifty thousand bushels. The long expected advance had set in. Wheat climbed steadily day by day. Occasionally it fell back for a day or two only to rally to a still higher point. For days together Norwell's profits were fifteen hundred dollars and occasionally three thousand dollars per day. He grew cheerful again. His spirits rose, and his old-time vivacity became habitual. He confided his great luck to Wylie. He felt so good over it that he must tell some one. But he did not tell his sister. The old-time confidences between them were no more. She noticed that he was unusually cheerful and guessed that perhaps he had made something, for she heard from friends how the lucky ones were raking in the dollars on the Board of Trade. She expected, of course, that he would lose it all again, and despaired of ever seeing her brother freed from this terrible gambling mania which had possessed him, and threatened to extinguish all his better qualities and ruin him forever.

Wheat continued to advance slowly. When Norwell's profits had mounted away into the thousands Wylie advised him to sell. But it was the universal opinion that wheat would touch a dollar and a quarter before it stopped. When it reached one eighteen Norwell closed his deal and drew out after paying all commissions, fifty thousand dollars in cash. He felt as if an unbearable weight had suddenly been removed from his shoulders. He had, when the advance became so persistent, determined to wait till he made fifty thousand, and as his profits swelled toward that figure the strain on his mind became intense. Do as he would he could not conceal it from Alice. She wondered what could be the cause of this sudden change in him. She knew that the total he had to invest must be very small, and its loss need not prove so great a source of anxiety. She little knew the great pressure he was enduring, and largely for her sake. During the last ten days wheat rose only four cents in the whole time, and Norwell, to conceal his anxiety as much as possible, staid down town evenings under pretense of working at the office.

But now the terrible strain was over, and he possessed a sum which most men would call a fortune. With almost frantic eagerness he clutched the precious check and hurried off to deposit it in the bank before the hour for clearing. His fingers trembled so that his indorsement was scarcely legible, and the bank teller, who knew him well, remarked his excitement, and on seeing the check guessed its cause.

"In luck, Norwell?" he said quietly.

"Yes, great luck."

Norwell opened an account with the bank and got a check book. That afternoon just before leaving the office he drew a check for twenty-five thousand dollars payable to Alice Norwell. He would have added interest, but he well knew that she would not accept it. That evening as they met at their boarding house she thought he acted strangely. He seemed in unusually good spirits and talked a great deal, but his light remarks were incoherent and in contrast to his usual mood lately. At length, with a voice that showed a tremor, though he did his best to control it, he began abruptly:

"Alice, you owe your poverty to me."

"Brother, we agreed long ago to say no more about that."

"But I will say something about it. I took your money. You called it theft. That was right, but I said you would be sorry for it sometime. Will this wipe away the stain of theft?" Then he handed her the envelope containing the check. With eager fingers she tore it open and read the amount.

"Oh, Tom, Tom!" she exclaimed, with tears springing to her eyes, "I would rather lose every dollar I ever had than have you speak so. Can't you forgive that hasty word?"

"As I said, you spoke only the truth. I have tried to make all the reparation possible."

"Brother, you have been true and kind, only say you will forgive me."

"Alice, don't ask forgiveness of me. It is I who should beg your pardon for causing you so much deprivation."

"Tom, say no more about hardships. God gives us duties, and we must perform them."

"Now, do you disapprove of my operating in grain?" he asked, in a tone of triumph.

"Tom," she replied, after hesitating a moment, "I cannot change my opinion."

"But you will keep the money?" She was silent. The right and wrong of some questions are beyond human ken.

His tone was pleasant, but she felt that his restitution could not restore the affection of the old days. There were too many causes of difference, and that was gone forever. He could not forgive her for being his superior in these matters of abstract right and practical patient endurance under trials. It wounded his pride and impeached his judgment, which he thought was superior in a man; moreover woman should recognize the fact. The very course which she had always condemned had at last brought him through safely. In his triumph he had forgotten to be generous. Even with the subject on his lips he did not realize all she had endured for him, and all she was willing to endure. He went on:

"Alice, I wish you would invest your money in your own way. I do not care to be intrusted with any responsibility concerning it. It has been only a bitter curse to me."

"Very well, Tom. I will do as you wish. It shall cause you no trouble."

For a time Alice Norwell was very unhappy over this estrangement. They went along just as before, and the world was not aware of this trouble between them. But it was

only the semblance of affection such as prevails in thousands of so-called happy homes. One deep, never-failing source of joy remained to her. Arthur Wilson was soon expected back from the West, and most likely the time was not far distant when, as his wife, Alice would be the happy possessor of a home of her own. Wilson had sold his interest in the Amazon. The branch of the Cobweb Line had been built to Ruby Buttes as projected. This great railway system had received a land grant from Congress, as did nearly all roads projected at that particular time. Guileless Congressmen had voted extraordinary inducements to the Cobweb, under the impression that they were aiding a road that would compete with the rapacious Midland Pacific, whose extortion had become well-nigh unbearable on the Pacific Coast. But as the projectors of the new road were really Henry Ingledee and his little clique of partners, who also owned the Midland Pacific, it was difficult for any one informed as to the facts, to see how competition would arise from any such combination. It looked more like fitting out the octopus with another long arm to drag in a few more victims.

Mining property rapidly advanced in value in anticipation of the greatly reduced cost of working the mines, and transporting ores to smelting centers, where they could be worked at a much greater profit. The Cobweb had a severe contest with a rival line for the possession of the celebrated Devil's Claw Canyon, through which mighty rent in the mountains there was room for only a single track. The militia were called out and some blood shed, but the Cobweb won, and held the canyon. All rivals were thus excluded from this region.

When the schedule of rates was announced it was found that freight on ores was so excessive that the railroad company absorbed most of the extra profits which otherwise would have followed from a reasonable tariff.* The principal mine owners protested, but in vain. A committee was appointed to confer with the officers of the road, and see whether lower rates could be obtained. Wilson was chairman of this committee. In that capacity he wrote to the Honorable Sanford Landis, at San Francisco, who was President of the Midland and Cobweb routes. He received in due time a reply, in which the Honorable gentleman referred

*Note 12.—The Mining Industry.

to, laid down the startling proposition that common carriers were private enterprises, and that their owners had as much right to charge what they pleased for services, as did the owner of a store to set a price on his goods. Further, this *Honorable* logician held that the true criterion by which all rates should be regulated was "what the traffic would bear."

Has this country ever before witnessed a like exhibition of brazen impudence, considering that this *Honorable* railroad officer was President of a system of lines, large portions of which had been built by the government, expressly to obtain cheap transportation for the people? Can rapacity go any farther, short of confiscation? Nay more, these logic-loving railway thieves compel merchants to exhibit their books and disclose profits, in order that a soulless corporation may know just what the traffic will bear.* No monarch in Europe, not excepting the Czar of Russia, dare go half so far.

In consequence of this announcement of the policy of the railway company, mining property fell to the old figures which it commanded when the ore was smelted by a wasteful process at home, for want of suitable ores to mix and facilitate the fluxing, and when all provisions were hauled in and bullion hauled out by wagon. Wilson and his partners sold for two and a half millions, a mine that would elsewhere under competitive rates, easily have brought five millions. With a fortune at command he determined to settle in the East, and enjoy the fruits of his successful venture.

Wilson spent a few weeks visiting with the Norwells. It was arranged that his marriage with Alice should not take place till a few months later. Tom Norwell, since his lucky deal in wheat, had thought of returning to New York, where his extensive acquaintance would probably enable him eventually to enter into business arrangements, which he could not hope to make among strangers. He wisely determined to hold on to the little he had rather than risk it in uncertain ventures. After considerable discussion of the matter, the Norwells finally decided to go East at once with Wilson.

Tom Norwell had, meantime, continued his correspondence with both Chetta Ingledee and May Bryce, and had visited the latter two or three times since leaving the farm. Instead of adhering to his resolution to cut short his correspondence with Chetta, he had weakly allowed it to go on.

*Note 13.—Stand and deliver.

Her letters constantly grew more confidential. His were friendly and non-committal. The tone of hers plainly indicated that the writer presumed on the fact that she and her correspondent were acknowledged lovers. He seldom gave the matter the consideration it demanded, because both women were at a distance, and their letters, though in the same pocket, could not quarrel. Lately he had hit on the idea of letting matters drift along till he returned to New York. Then of course he should cease correspondence with Chetta, and would find a means of withdrawing himself from her society. But the young lady herself upset all his plans, and he soon realized that he was in a most uncomfortable fix. This passionate, spirited woman had always loved this man. Now that she had, as she believed, a real hold on his affections, she would die sooner than surrender him to another woman. She loved Tom Norwell, she had always loved him, and now she believed that he loved her. When it came to the test he lacked the courage to disabuse her mind of its illusion, and confess to her his weakness and baseness.

Norwell still would not admit to himself that he was anything but an old friend of Chetta Ingledee. He never really thought of breaking faith with May. Her beauties of person and character, and her unaffected simplicity of manner still charmed him, as they had at first won his heart. He had acknowledged long ago that she was not suitable for a wife for him. He wished that she had a little more of that peculiar practical discrimination of persons and things, which some people can never acquire, no matter how great their experience. He should have liked if her innocent simplicity had not been accompanied by so large a portion of credulity, for May, judging others by herself, trusted implicitly any one in whom she once placed confidence. He would positively have liked her better if she could have followed her first thought of Chetta Ingledee to its conclusion, and have discovered his own unintentional but cowardly dilly-dallying. Possibly he would have liked her better had she been jealous, and had spoken her mind plainly. Still he would marry her, come what may, as soon as he was established in business and had an assured income.

Tom went out to Prairie Grande for a short visit before going East. He told the Bryces of his recent good fortune, and they were greatly pleased. It kindled a secret joy in May's heart, for she thought that now the wedding day, which

heretofore had been a disembodied phantom that vainly sought a location in the calendar of time, might at last be projected into the visible horizon. Surely, she thought, fifty thousand dollars was enough for any man to begin life with, particularly when his wife was willing to begin it with nothing but his love. The two or three days of his visit went rapidly by. They drove in those balmy May days along the level roads where the grass was springing everywhere, and the osage hedges, with their delicate green, contrasted with the dark green of the older grass. Tom laughed heartily, as he recalled some of his own ludicrous adventures of the previous summer. She made him bouquets of the wild flowers, and for a brief time he thought he should like to abandon forever the smoke, dirt and worry of a great city to dwell in this capricious climate of alternate storm and sunshine. But the thought of farm life as he had found it instantly dispelled these fancies. It is a good thing to change occupations for a season, when discontent settles deeply into our natures. The man who grumbles at too much wheat bread and butter, will change his tune after he has lived for months on corn bread and pork gravy. Misfortune past is the parent of content.

On the Sunday afternoon, which was the last day of Tom's visit, the lovers sat in the yard on a bench under a great apple tree. The male robins flew here and there incessantly, beguiling the tedious hours during which the female brooded on her eggs. Now they quirked and hopped, and scolded these intruders, as they flitted from tree to tree. The afternoon sun shone brightly through the trembling leaves. A light breeze showered the perfumed petals down around them, and the rustling of the leaves stilled the senses into harmony with this delightful quiet Sabbath. There was nothing to mar the beauty of the scene. The only thing that reminded the lovers of the great world, was a buggy that passed down the road, containing also two lovers, happy like themselves. May had brought out some books and papers to read. Tom had read to her a very funny piece from the pen of a celebrated humorist. May took up a volume which chanced to be the poems of Coleridge. Among the books at this old farmhouse were a complete set of the British poets, and what is unusual in these days of cheap "libraries" and voluminous turnip-juice literature, they were often read. May read to him that exquisite poem beginning:

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stir this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of love,
And feed his sacred flame."

Comments were made on the literary beauties of the poem, and Tom remarked finally that it stated the case pretty strongly.

"But don't you think it may be true in some cases, Tom?"

"Prairie Blossom, those things exist in the imagination of poets, but nowhere else, in my opinion."

"I think differently; I think there are people to whom love is just what Coleridge pictures it."

"They may imagine it to be so, just as the poet did."

May then turned to the "Ancient Mariner," which strange, weird story she had many times read. She paused at the allusion to the wedding feast, but Tom made no comment. She seized this opportunity for mentioning the subject nearest her heart. She disliked to speak, but if her lover would not she would be obliged to break the silence. When he first mentioned his intention of going to New York she was in despair. That would in all probability defer their marriage, and this easy-going lover might continue for years a lover before he became a husband.

"Tom, what if an ancient mariner should interrupt our wedding guests?"

"I'd have a policeman after him quick enough. But then that is impossible, May; there are no mariners out here since the prairie schooner is extinct."

"But the sailor may come in disguise and cause delay." He understood the delicate hint at once.

"No, dear, in due time we shall be married in spite of all the ancient mariners or gabbling old persons in Christendom. Nothing shall ever part us."

"Can you not see your way clear now, Tom? You have been lucky. Fifty thousand dollars is a fortune." She knew nothing of Alice's having received half of the money, and he could not disclose that humiliating secret.

"Fifty thousand would be a great deal of money here, but remember, dear girl, that we are to live in New York." She almost hated the name of New York, coupled as it was, with his ambitious hopes.

"How much do you want, Tom?"

"Not less than a hundred thousand."

"That is a great deal of money. We may never have so much," she said, rather discouraged.

"Never fear; we must hope. Then neither of us is growing old yet. Really, dear, can you not wait a year or two for me till the way is clearer?"

"Tom, can you doubt me? Yes, I can wait many years for you, though I should be happy to be with you, and help you make your fortune, but I will trust to your judgment and wait patiently."

"It will not be long, I hope."

"It cannot be very long."

Next day he bade the family adieu and returned to the city. With a sad heart May saw him go. A part of the light had gone out of her existence. Instead of the blissful happiness of the last year, she had what?—only waiting.

The same afternoon she hitched her pony to the buggy and started to drive to a neighbor's. As she passed out of sight behind the barn, she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten her driving gloves. She hitched the pony there, and, entering by the lane, came into the house at the back door. While looking for her gloves, she overheard a brief dialogue between her parents, which sent a chill foreboding to her heart. They were talking earnestly, thinking themselves alone.

"Mary, I think you are too hard on the young man."

"I tell you I have reasons for my distrust. Why does he not marry now that he has plenty of money? What is the use of this continual delay?"

"Mary, there is no hurry. The young man is entitled to his opinion about what is best for him."

"Jacob, I fear he is not sincere. In my opinion there is another girl mixed up in the affair. What did I tell you all along?"

"Fiddlesticks, that is all nonsense."

"That is what you always say, Jacob. You have stood up for him all the time. But I tell you he doesn't act like a man who is very deep in love."

"There's a good deal of moonshine about love, Mary."

"May be there is, but she just adores him. Poor child, I'm afraid she is only making trouble for herself."

At first May resented this imputation on her lover. She stole quietly from the house, and went on her visit. But as she drove along, the remarks of her mother sank deeper and deeper.

CHAPTER XLII.

ARTHUR WILSON, ESQUIRE, MILLIONAIRE, VERSUS ARTHUR WILSON, POOR YOUNG MAN.—THE SNICKERS EXHIBIT THE FAMILY JOSS.

During the summer, Alice Norwell visited with some friends at a quiet seaside resort where Wilson and Tom occasionally spent a Sunday with her, or made various short pleasure excursions of their own planning. Autumn came, and with it the gay thousands who had been spending the heated term at the summer resorts. Society was getting ready to undergo another season with all the scheming, rivalry, triumphs, and disappointments which, if not cut up into "seasons," would doubtless extinguish utterly the fashionable machinery. Norwell and his sister, who had heretofore through all their misfortunes and poverty, succeeded in maintaining a home by keeping up the tender domestic ties of childhood, now concluded to separate. It was his plan. He gave as a reason that cheaper lodgings could be obtained in that way than by hiring enough rooms to maintain their old style of living. This was true, but Alice saw plainly that economy was not the real cause of his wish to be free from her. She made no objection, though she felt that now indeed the most sacred ties, hallowed by time and affection, were severed never more to be resumed. Unavailing regrets were useless. Families must break up sometime finally, and the time had come with theirs. She was grieved at the manner of their separation. She had once hoped that her brother could always be to her what he had been in their childhood days. But that could never be again, and she consented readily to his proposition. As Alice had been absent from New York for a year or more, her engagement with Arthur Wilson was not generally known, and they decided to make no formal announcement of the fact.

Wilson's wealth made him an object to society. The difference between Arthur Wilson, a poor young man seeking employment, and Mr. Wilson the millionaire, was as great as

the distance from the zenith to the nadir. When stylish people were introduced to Arthur Wilson, the plainly dressed young man from the country, he was greeted with a polite bow, and at most a few minutes' careless conversation. Next day the same people, as a rule, did not know him at all if they met him by chance. Occasionally some old-fashioned lady or gentleman, who was pretty well through with the nonsense of this life, or some very plain young lady, who was obliged to be agreeable, found Wilson a very congenial acquaintance. But, on the whole, a little circle of oblivion surrounded him that annihilated any feeling of sociability in himself. He was in the condition of the man who tries to warm himself at the phosphorescent glow of decaying wood, imagining it to be real fire. It is a pretty sentiment that ascribes to modest merit its unfailing reward. On the whole, it does credit to the human race, and is an evidence that people's intentions are good. But it is a noticeable fact, that the merit which meets with the biggest reward is that which is possessed of a good-sized trumpet on which it discreetly toots from time to time. If this useful piece of furniture is of gold and silver, a kind public will volunteer to do the tooting—for a consideration.

Toward Arthur Wilson, millionaire, all this was changed. He was pointed out as the wealthy Colorado miner, and his million several times multiplied. Strange to relate, people seemed to have better memories than formerly. Persons who had been introduced to him in the bustle of a great crowd, with time for only the shortest greetings, could remember him a month afterward, and were ready to take the first steps in subsequent recognition. Mammas with marriageable daughters thought him a most excellent young man, whose acquaintance was greatly to be desired. Beautiful young ladies in ravishing toilets sought introductions, made themselves most agreeable, and invited him to call on the shortest possible acquaintance permitted by the canons of etiquette. If perchance, he met these same ladies on the street, they invariably recognized him. He was no more brilliant than he had been. Association with rustlers, gamblers, and greasers had not improved his manners greatly. He had no thrilling tales of border warfare to tell. He had never set up in his life for a wit, and if he had, his reputation would not have been greatly enhanced by a protracted diet of Missouri bacon and Boston baked beans. Just now it is fashion-

able with certain iconoclasts to go round exploding old notions to which clings the reverence usually attached to antiquity, especially the humbug part of antiquity. Now I wish to practice with a "44" for a few moments on the absurd notion that beans are necessarily an intellect-producing article of diet. I am aware that they are freely partaken of, apparently without disastrous consequences, in one of the most intellectual centers of the world. But the good effects observed in that locality must be attributed to the atmosphere, or to some other undiscovered cause, for it is an incontestable fact that elsewhere a diet of pork and beans does not produce the same desirable results.

Wilson felt ill at ease in all this glitter to which he had not been accustomed. He thought it a waste of time to winnow social chaff for an entire evening to get a few grains of shriveled wheat. Yet all that Arthur Wilson, millionaire, said or did was approved by society, and duly stamped with the official seal of Mrs. Grundy.

Another person, whose history is linked with this story, is visiting in New York during the winter. May Bryce had thought much over the disagreeable possibilities implied in the remark which she had accidentally overhead as it fell from her mother's lips that afternoon in her Illinois home. Could her lover be untrue? No, he had explained satisfactorily his reasons for not marrying. Her mother knew nothing of this, or she would have thought differently. But that allusion to another young lady in the case, troubled May, struggle as she might against it. Little by little she lost her elasticity of spirits, and was less inclined to drive out to visit the neighbors, as was her custom. She grew thinner, and complained frequently of being tired. On being questioned, she answered that she was perfectly well. Letters came regularly from her lover, and the parents were at a loss to account for the change. Mrs. Bryce thought that her daughter's former visit to the city had caused the same symptoms, but now they had returned amidst the quiet duties of farm life. Mr. and Mrs. Bryce finally decided that a change would benefit May, and, as the winters on the prairies were very severe, it was decided to allow her to visit her aunt in the East, with the injunction that she must not spend so much time in the city. Mrs. Bryce wrote her sister the facts in the case, and asked her to be particularly careful of the charge intrusted to her care.

Alice and May were now on the best of terms. Alice

had for a long time felt that her brother was not treating May right. She sincerely loved this country lass, and determined, so far as in her lay, to make amends for him, if that were possible, by kindness on her own part. Finally, she came to the conclusion that this love affair had not gone so far as she suspected. But as Tom unfailingly called when May was there, Alice knew that there must be collusion between them. Then she arrived at a conclusion frequently reached by interested female relatives on similar occasions; she would break off the relations between the lovers, if that were possible, because as things were going now there was only misery in store for them both. She hinted to May that, perhaps, certain traits of her brother would sometime render his character unsteady. She felt guilty in thus speaking against Tom, but a consciousness of an upright motive sustained her in doing it. But May received the communication with such bad grace, and, moreover, seemed so distressed by it, that Alice at once guessed the whole truth, and then there was only love in her heart, and sympathy for her unhappy friend.

One evening, as the two women sat in Alice's cosy room before the cheerful grate fire, Mary Hackett called. Mary had kept up her acquaintance with Alice. Tom Norwell still called on Mary and Aunt Rhoda occasionally, but not so often as formerly. Mary was now neatly dressed, and looked unusually well She had lately been made forewoman in the pamphlet department at the bindery, and received a salary of twenty dollars per week, on which she and Aunt Rhoda, with the little income they already possessed, managed to live very comfortably. Presently, a knock was heard at the door, and Tom Norwell greeted his sister as she opened it.

Norwell chatted and jested in his usual lively vein. He tried to divide his attentions as best he could between May and Mary Hackett. The observant eye of the latter, however, carefully studied the situation. She saw that while Tom Norwell was studiously trying to entertain everybody, he was really thinking of Miss Bryce. A half hour was pleasantly passed in conversation, and Mary rose to go. Tom insisted on seeing her home, and would hear no refusal. When they arrived at Mary's home, Tom declined to go in, though it was not late and he knew Aunt Rhoda would be glad to see him. He bade Mary good-night and passed down the ricketty stairway. Aunt Rhoda met her at the door.

"Mary, who was that with you?"

"Mr. Norwell."

"Why couldn't he come in?" asked the old lady rather sharply.

"I don't know, Aunt. I asked him in."

"I don't like his slippin' round that way. I like to see folks above board in sich doin's."

"What do you mean, Auntie?"

"Oh, land sakes, you know what I mean. If John was alive he wouldn't allow you to go gallivantin' round with young men that can't show their faces."

"Auntie," said Mary, with dignity, "Mr. Norwell is a gentleman. He came only because he would not allow me to come home alone. I don't think you have a right to speak that way." Mary now burst into tears.

"Land sakes, child," said Aunt Rhoda, more kindly, "don't take on that way. I meant no harm, but I know young folks need a little advice now and then."

Mary had not heard the last of Aunt Rhoda's speech. She had gone into the little bedroom, and flinging herself on the bed, had burst into a passionate flood of bitter tears. Tom Norwell had been to her the ideal of manly beauty and manly virtues. She had admired him from a child, though she realized how far he was above her and the uselessness of her thinking of him more than as a friend. Even that she knew was a condescension on his part. She had never regarded him in any other light. His great kindness to her brother had made her friendship and gratitude for him as firm, as deep, and as lasting, as such a feeling can exist. She would have made any sacrifice to aid him in trouble. Now, when she had seen the beauty of this Prairie Flower of whom she had heard, Mary Hackett realized that another had come forever between her and Tom Norwell, and that she loved him, deeply, passionately, with a love she could never forget. She knew well that even without a rival such love must be hopeless. She could have endured this, but to have Aunt Rhoda blunder on her secret, which had been a secret even to herself, and to hear her censure Norwell, who was as innocent in the matter as an angel of light, was more than woman's nature could endure. She shed scalding tears of bitter, comfortless despair, while Aunt Rhoda, all unconscious of the misery she had caused, sat industriously plying her needle in the little sitting room.

The social top was now spinning at its dizziest rate. Miss Harrie Snicker had concluded as a mere interlude to more important events to give a small, select card party. Miss Harrie, having with difficulty consoled herself after Garmand's sudden disappearance, was casting her eye about for other masculine subjects to practice her little arts upon, which to her surprise did not as a rule prove so powerful as she anticipated. Miss Snicker was fully possessed with the idea that her charms were by no means common. Had she not associated with them for years intimately? And a Snicker would not associate with anything common. Hence she was always at a loss to discover why the young men of her set failed to recognize in them something uncommon. Meantime Mr. Bradley had worshiped at a distance, and in proximity when the paternal vigilance was relaxed.

Miss Snicker had lately acquired a new accomplishment. To speak French was the very latest absurdity of high society, and now vivisection of the Gallic tongue might be witnessed in almost every fashionable assemblage. The Anglo-Saxon, with its rugged phrase, no longer sufficed to express the strivings of the "utter" aristocracy after the unreachable. Conversation was carried on d'une maniere exquise, and to Miss Snicker's mind this was comme il faut, which she rendered in a tripping enunciation as "kummil faw." The French of Fifth avenue was on a higher plane than the French of the boulevards of Paris. In fact, natives of France had been known to acknowledge its superiority in the necessity of resorting to English as a medium of communication, thus pleading guilty to a lamentable ignorance of the niceties of their own tongue. Miss Snicker had remarked on this tendency in foreigners and observed to an astonished Gaul that it was not "kummil faw. N'est ce pas?" she continued, pronouncing the phrase *naisy paw*. "Mademoiselle de Snicker, you speaks ze Francais parfaitement, but I prefair ze Inglees?"

"Indeed! Well, I don't care much about it now. It is getting unfamiliar. Voila toot. Adieu, Manseer."

Miss Harrie, assisted by a dear friend in that most perplexing of all tasks, revising her list (for invitation lists, like school books, must be constantly revised up to date), suddenly remembered that she had an acquaintance with Arthur Wilson. He was added to the list.

There was an ill-defined rumor current to the effect that

Tom Norwell had made a fortune in Chicago. Until it received definite corroboration or contradiction, Miss Snicker generously consented to a suspension of judgment in the case of the Norwells, and gave them the benefit of the doubt before pronouncing them too "common" to swim in the highly rarefied stratum of social culture in which the Snicker family serenely floated. She was somewhat confirmed in this decision by the fact that her powerful friend, Miss Ingledee, had once or twice very promptly resented a fling at the Norwells.

Miss Snicker's card party was a success. At any rate, the refreshments, by Del Mundo, were simply exquisite. That was the chief thing to begin on. Then the outré tones of Miss Harrie's zebra-streaked, flower-bespangled, yellow dress compensated amply for the very negative tints of her features and personality. The "Old Commoner" assisted in entertaining with a great deal of pompous fussiness. He was here and there doing the agreeable, on strictly business principles. His shirt which was as stiff as a board, his glossy high collar which chafed a scarlet line beneath his smooth fat jaw, his broadcloth coat that strove to compress his ample figure, and his massive gold watch and chain, together with his brusque pay-as-you-go air, all seemed to say plainly, "I am doing this genteelly, as becomes a man who scooped a million out of sugar." Strange to say he never alluded during the entire evening to that famous saccharine feat. After having heard it mentioned several thousand times, it finally began to dawn upon Mrs. and Miss Snicker that perhaps the public might be losing interest in the subject, and would welcome a change in the conversational key note. Straightway Miss Snicker began the arduous task of readjusting the paternal colloquial machinery: "Now, Pa, please don't mention that horrid sugar again. You know everybody has heard of it a dozen times."

Mr. Fred Snicker was a thing of high, very high art. His clothes fitted him, as the bullet fits the copper sheath of the cartridge. A little joining paste might have given rise to the illusion that they grew there. As to how he ever got into them, or expected to get out again,—well, let the veil of privacy conceal such a distressing problem. His collar, which was one story higher than the parental neck protector, was surreptitiously, with remorseless edge, sawing off his ears. The only hope for these conspicuous organs was that the style would change before the bloody deed was accomplished.

This formidable linen fortification concealed a neck that sorely needed shielding from the gaze of a heartless world, and partially did the same for the over-ambitious lower jaw that once upon a time had vainly attempted to swallow the modest, unoffending chin. The latter feature had barely escaped complete destruction from this ruthless incursion of its aggressive neighbor. Now it timidly posed as best it could, wholly exposed to view, a type of unprotected innocence. Mr. Fred Snicker's mustache had made material advancement since we last saw him. It was, in fact, now plainly visible to the naked eye across a room when the light was good and the perspective favorable. The observer's attention needed to be stimulated, however, to secure favorable results, just as a long blue line in the horizon, which we took at a casual glance to be a part of the sky, proves on closer inspection to be water. The florist had also done his duty well. No odious fish gewanium lurked in Young Snicker's dainty boutoniere to tax his energies with its howid, disagweeable, exhausting odoh.

Mrs. Snicker occupied her usual vacuum. The reader may take exception to this statement, and hurl at it the time-honored proposition of physics that nature abhors a vacuum. This proposition is doubtless true in a physical sense, but nature (or art) must love vacuums in society, seeing the number she produces.

Two hours were spent at various games of cards according to the tastes of the company. When a change of partners was made Miss Harrie Snicker managed to appropriate Arthur Wilson, while Fred secured May Bryce, and Chetta Ingledee fell to Norwell. The table at which May sat, was so situated that she could quietly observe all that passed in the large parlors. She thought she could detect in Chetta the old air of triumph which she had noticed once before. May became abstracted, and played poorly, greatly to the chagrin of her partner who prided himself on his skill, though he frequently forgot what cards had been played. Mr. Fred Snicker was much annoyed, and took little pains to conceal his feelings. He afterward remarked to his friend, Stilwell:

"Deuced pwetty girl that Pwayeh Bwossum and weally watheh intewesting, but she cawn't play cards for pins; weally she cawn't." Mr. Stilwell, who suddenly remembered a former conversation on the same subject, remarked, with a serious air:

"Snicker, laying all jest aside, is it true that country girls milk cows?"

"No, it isn't. It's a downright slander. Say, Geawge," he added confidentially, "I looked at her hand and managed to squeeze it a little, you knaw, when we shook hands"—

"Of course, I understand."

"And it is as soft as mine."

"No?"

"Yaas, fact."

"I shouldn't have believed it."

"Yaas?"

"Have you proposed yet, Snicker?"

"Now weally, Geawge, I think that is abwupt to ask a gentleman such a question so abwuptly, don't you?"

"I beg your pardon! No offense, I hope."

"I don't mind telling you, though, that I'm considewing it. I'm afwaid the Governor would kick up a gwand wow, so I've not given myself away yet."

Wilson found Miss Snicker a rather poor whist partner. She kept continually asking what was trumps, and invariably played a king when an opponent held the ace. But she played her cards much better in securing her full share of his society. After the cards she still clung to him and endeavored to entertain him by appearing interested in what she imagined might be of greatest interest to him, the place where he made his money.

"Mr. Wilson," she asked, "did you see any of those dreadful savages?"

"Which savages, Miss Snicker?"

"Why, the Indians to be sure."

"Oh, yes, I saw Indians."

"What do you think is the most noticeable thing about the red man, Mr. Wilson?"

"Rags and dirt," was the laconic repiy, at which Miss Snicker elevated slightly the end of her little pug nose. Had any one but an English "me lud," or a millionaire made the remark, she would have considered it inexcusably vulgar. As it was, she was not offended at it nor at the millionaire, though her delicate sensibility had received an unpleasant shock through the disagreeable association of ideas. But every sphere of life has its painful duties, and it was now Miss Harrie's duty as a matter of courtesy to reply, however indelicate the subject might be:

"Poor creatures, I suppose they have to spend all their time making nice things for other people."

"Yes, they do devote a great deal of attention to other people."

"I suppose, Mr. Wilson, you have ever so many curiosities that you bought from them. I should like some as bric-a-bric. You'll give me some, pipes and things, won't you?" she added softly, with a languishing look.

"I should, with pleasure, if I had them, Miss Snicker. But I saw nothing of the sort among the Indians of Colorado."

"Why, don't they spend nearly all their time making such things? I thought they did. The Indians at the Falls do."

"The custom differs slightly out West."

"Indeed! and-d—oh, what *was* I going to say—yes, I know. It must be delightful driving round the mountains, looking for gold. Of course you had an open carriage, so you could see the scenery?"

Wilson could not repress a look of astonishment, then added quietly:

"Yes, our carriage was very open, but not always erect, and sometimes scarcely dignified."

It was now Miss Snicker's turn to look astonished, as she gazed at her companion in helpless bewilderment:

"Not erect! not dignified! I think I scarcely follow you, Mr. Wilson. You mean the driver, don't you?" He pitied her ignorance, and wished to spare her feelings, half ashamed of what he had done.

"I mean, Miss Snicker, that we *walked*. You see," he added apologetically, "there are no roads on the mountains."

"Walked over all those horrid mountains! Why, how could you? It must be very fatiguing. There must be a great deal of exercise connected with the mining business."

"Yes, there is plenty of exercise. As much I think, as in any business."

"Why do they always dig mines in the mountains? Couldn't they just as well make them on level ground?"

"People have to dig where the mineral abounds. Of course there have been some exceptions to this rule in the history of mining, but then on the whole, people prefer to dig where there is a prospect of ore."

"Oh, I see," replied Harrie, as if struck suddenly by an idea. "The silver and gold are mostly found in the mountains, and so they have to put the mines there. Why didn't I think of that at first?"

"Yes, that's the idea."

"Miners all get dreadfully rich, don't they?" As Wilson thought of San Juan Shorty and some of the other old "rustlers," he could scarcely avoid laughing aloud. But he politely replied:

"Some do, many do not. It is rather a hazardous business."

Suddenly, Miss Snicker, having a curiosity to know whether miners understood French, ventured the remark, as a feeler, that she thought the company unusually "rechurchy."

"Excuse me, Miss Snicker, what did you say?"

"Cette compagnie est kummil faw. Naisy paw?"

"I beg pardon, but I do not speak French."

"Oh, I only said the company was very select. Forgive me for speaking French. It comes so natural."

After refreshments were served the little company re-arranged itself in groups for miscellaneous social discourse. The doings of society were duly canvassed, the latest books discussed by some, and the new plays criticised by others. Miss Ingledee had been studying May, while the latter had been doing the same for the well-known heiress. Chetta was resolved to learn more of this fair stranger. She engaged May in conversation, and managed to draw her aside into a deep window where they were alone. She hoped to be able to draw out this simple girl and get her to disclose something of her acquaintance with Tom Norwell. She had reason to believe that May knew very little, if anything of Tom's intimate acquaintance with herself, and at last she harbored the suspicion that perhaps her lover was engaged in a flirtation with this girl. Chetta suspected that May was trying to win Norwell, and it was better to know, if possible, just how far she had progressed. Perhaps she could trap May into confiding in her. It was a plan obviously unfair, but Chetta saw no other way, and fell back on the old maxim, "All's fair in love and war." But her most skillful efforts were adroitly frustrated. They talked for some time about the Norwells, but May said a great deal about Alice, and little about Tom. In reply to Chetta's inquiries if they had been neighbors in Illinois, May's only reply was that they lived a mile apart.

Chetta, stung by secret jealousy, resolved to learn what she wished by stratagem. She could easily see that this girl was somewhat unsophisticated in the ways of the world, and naturally very sensitive. She would draw her out in some way if necessary, by alarming her. Chetta found it easy to

excuse what to others seems heartless. In self-defense, she was fighting for what was as dear to her as life. The enemy who invaded her domain must expect to be punished. Then, if May really cared nothing for Norwell, no harm would be done by this cunning but keen arrow. Chetta adroitly turned the conversation toward the drama, and incidentally mentioned the tragedy Francesca da Rimini, then being played by a celebrated actor. The plot of this play hinges, as the reader doubtless knows, on the fact that a young man sent to bring home the betrothed of his brother, himself falls in love with the beautiful girl. The enraged elder brother surprises the guilty pair in a tender love scene, and kills them both in his mad fury. May had not seen the play. Her interest increased as Chetta adroitly wove with the thread of the story, her scornful condemnation of the traitor. May listened with breathless interest as the fatal denouement was reached. "Thus," said Chetta, in a voice which trembled with passion, "died this base traitor, the basest of his kind, for of all traitors he is the worst who betrays love. He deserved to die like a dog."

Though there was small love between the fierce, crooked elder brother and his beautiful bride, the story furnished an excellent text, which this wily commentator had determined to enlarge upon. "The person who comes between two who have loved long and truly, is a base thief. No good can come of stolen love. The meanest thief is he who steals affection."

May was surprised and somewhat startled at the energy displayed by this passionate woman. A virtuous indignation might grow denunciatory on such a theme, but here was a combative energy, which indicated a deep feeling on the part of the impassioned reciter of the tragic story. May grew very pale as it suddenly flashed upon her that all this acting had a purpose. She saw at a glance with her keen, womanly instinct that here was a rival, and one whose resources far outweighed her own. She shuddered at the thought. Chetta saw the impression she had made and followed it up, after a moment's pause, by asking "What do you think of the culmination of the plot, Miss Bryce?"

"I think that such cases seldom occur. True love never betrays love. Had this younger brother truly loved Francesca he would have gone away from her forever."

This answer was hardly what Chetta expected. It puz-

zled her. One thing was plain, the two women, though not open rivals, suspected and secretly feared each other, one with the angry fear that feels itself wronged, the other with that haunting, possessing fear that is conscious of weakness, and dreads a superior foe. The love of this romantic, inexperienced maiden was matched in a conflict for life, with that of this aggressive, wary city belle, aided by all the refined arts of a high culture and intimate knowledge of the world. For the vanquished there could be only misery.

CHAPTER XLIII.

SOME OF AMERICA'S GREAT FINANCIERS.—HOW TO RETIRE FROM BUSINESS.

A long time has elapsed since we first made the acquaintance of the Honorable Dave Sawder. That eminent statesman and patriot is in the line of promotion. Having for several years gallantly flung his banner to the breeze in the very teeth of the demoralized opposition, and charged up and down the halls of Congress like a knight of old, challenging them to wordy conflict, the Honorable Dave has been advanced by a grateful public to a seat in the Senate of the United States. In that august body it is necessary for the Honorable Dave to tone down a few of his more telling and dramatic figures of rhetoric, and startling devices of oratory which so well become the House of Representatives and the stump. He is now laboring to combine the stately gravity of a Roman father, with the prosiness which is the most conspicuous characteristic of a United States Senator of the present decade. His old-time fellow laborer, Senator Sublet, who joined shoulder to shoulder with the House ring to push through all the notorious subsidy schemes of Ophir, Ingledee and Company, has retired permanently from politics and is now free to follow the bent of his abounding piety. This arch hypocrite was openly detected attempting to bribe a member of the State legislature, before which he was a candidate for re-election to the Senate of the United States. Sublet disappeared in disgrace. Though the American people have unbounded admiration for a great thief, they have no sympathy

for the man who is too clumsy to wriggle out of a corner when caught. Sawder of course was righteously indignant at the culpability of Sublet, and denounced (only when cornered himself) the man with whom he had joined hand in hand to promote many a corrupt job.

Several other of Sawder's early friends have disappeared from public view. Among them was Mr. Oakesworth, whose figure was once a prominent one around Washington. Mr. Oakesworth was well-known among the Congressmen of that period. They had good reasons for knowing him, for he carried his check book in one hand and in the other a package of stocks of the "Construction Credit Company," a mysterious concern which earned fabulous dividends. He needed no other introduction to a member of that Congress. But Mr. Oakesworth's little scheme was laid bare by a congressional investigating committee, and that gentleman died of a broken heart at the attendant disgrace. Mr. Sawder has been ambitious in the direction of the Presidency. But the American people cling to the notion that only strict, unswerving, unpurchasable honesty should be elevated to that high office, while the Honorable Dave Sawder and his friends claim that he has been greatly misunderstood, abused, and maligned.

One of the latest achievements attributed to the Honorable Dave Sawder and his political cronies, was to secure the defeat of a bill by the provisions of which the Government was authorized to construct and operate a telegraph system in conjunction with the Postoffice Department. The great National Union Telegraph Company had grown into a vampire whose rapacity was insatiable. Of all the fat, yet ever hungry monopolies of the country, this, with the possible exception of the Octopus Oil Company, was the most profitable, and consequently the most greedy. It had the absolute control of all the news of the country which it withheld and manipulated at will. Its profits were so great that after declaring a liberal dividend, a surplus of several millions had accumulated which was divided as a script dividend. By this and other pretexts for the issue of stock the great National Union had watered its securities, till, by a careful estimate, based on the actual value of their plant, the stock amounted to at least three times the actual capital invested. A dividend of eight per cent. on their nominal capital was thus a dividend of twenty-four per cent. on the money actually invested.

A business man is usually satisfied with a reasonable profit on money actually invested. Railroad and telegraph lines double or treble their capital (on paper) by their own will, and impudently demand that the public shall pay an interest on this pretended capital which never existed.*

When the enterprising Ophir had his attention directed to the National Union he saw at a glance what a choice plum it was. Immediately his mouth watered for the tempting fruit, and he began slily to shake the tree. But it was not to be had. The owners thought it was a good enough thing to keep. Ophir at once set about building the People's Union as an opposition line. The word People's had a peculiarly agreeable sound in the ears of the masses. Many were verdant enough to suppose that this was really a people's line, just because its projectors said so. The People's Union built thousands of miles of line all over the country in an incredibly short space of time. The infant in a few months grew so large that it threatened to swallow or ruin its older rival. The result may be told in three short sentences. First, there was a war of rates; then consolidation of the two companies, with excessive issue of watered stock; and finally, higher charges without competition. Meantime the Honorable Dave Sawder & Co. took care to see that the people of the United States obtained no relief through a postal telegraph.

Arthur Wilson had been looking for an opportunity to make a safe and favorable investment of the large sum of money at his disposal. The People's Union was said to offer unusual inducement to investors. Wilson investigated the matter thoroughly. He was naturally cautious, and his short experience in life had by no means increased his faith in the integrity of most men who manage great stock companies. He reasoned that few men could be honest in such positions, because the great momentum of corporate influence crushes the voice of the individual, even were he disposed to protest. Finally he had a private interview with Ophir himself. That gentleman, of course, recommended the People's Union as a good thing, a safe thing. As the stock was offered considerably below par and beyond doubt would pay handsome dividends, Wilson finally concluded to take a large block.

Scarcely had the consolidation of the National Union and the People's telegraph companies been effected, when the

*Note 14.—Profits of Corporations.

genius of this remarkable man Ophir, exhibited a new and totally unexpected phase. Ophir certainly deserves his reputation as the most remarkable money-maker of the century. His prolific brain teemed with new expedients to hoodwink the public, baffle his rivals, and secure his own triumph. If the genius of effrontery deserves to be commemorated, then New York should proclaim Ophir "divine," after the fashion of the Romans of old, and set some score or more of his brazen statues in her busiest places.

Ophir's latest stroke of policy was to announce that he was about to retire from business. The "Daily Planet" and the "Censure" which he controlled, published some two pages of his life and great achievements, concluding with the authoritative statement that Mr. John Ophir, weary of business cares, and satisfied with a snug fortune of one hundred millions, was about to seek the quiet of private life. Ophir was, yet scarcely fifty, and as he had begun life in a very humble business capacity, the people stood astounded at his phenomenal success. What wonder that they should do so in a nation where money is the one god before which thou shalt have none other, where it is at once the god of business, the god of pleasure, and the household lares!

Ophir's retirement was heralded all over the world. The country press copied the articles from the New York papers and the great man's name jingled continually on the public tongue for a time. The public, with its customary verdancy, took him at his word, and thought that, having stolen enough he was really going to step aside and give the other fellows a chance. The foreign press reprinted the article, commented on it in their usual hazy fashion where American affairs are concerned, and finally dropped it. They were unable to figure out the tremendous problem of how any man could begin on nothing and accumulate one hundred millions in twenty-five years. They gave it up in despair. Ophir's retirement, which had seemed premature, was simple enough when explained. He was loaded up with stocks. He foresaw a period of financial depression, and was willing to part with his stocks at high prices and fill up his vaults with cash. He could easily buy the stocks back for half the money when the crash came. His quitting business was an advertisement, and withal, a colossal stroke of policy.

CHAPTER XLIV.

IN WHICH MISS INGLEDEE STARTLES HER RIVAL, PROVOKES THE WRATH OF HER FATHER, DARES A LOVER, AND BECOMES AN EXILE FROM HOME.

Miss Ingledee had enjoyed but a doubtful and fleeting triumph, on the occasion of her conversation with May Bryce at Miss Snicker's party. For a brief time she imagined that her simple rival would abandon a contest where the odds were so greatly against her. She grew indignant, as she thought of Miss Bryce's presumption, and though she knew it was unchristian, thought that a triumph over her rival would be the sweetest revenge. She considered it an act of theft on May's part, taking it for granted that the girl was making most of the advances to Norwell, who sought the society of his old friend as before. She believed him incapable of deliberate duplicity. After the repeated hints she had given May Bryce concerning her own acquaintance with Norwell, she considered it an unpardonable piece of presumption on the part of that young lady to continue angling after him. Her anger rose hotter, the more she thought of this affair. She had been instrumental in getting May into the best society, and this was the result. "The ungrateful little designing minx! I'll teach her a lesson she'll not forget soon," was her angry soliloquy. Then she experienced again a moment's triumph as she thought of May's pale face and frightened aspect when the awful fate of Francesca da Rimini had shadowed forth the revenge of outraged love. In truth, May Bryce, unused to exciting scenes, and thrown off her guard by the suddenness of the incident, had for a moment believed Chetta capable of wreaking the Italian's vengeance where there was only an imaginary offense.

But later thoughts changed all this, and Chetta was obliged to acknowledge that she could never frighten this woman to give up Norwell, provided he offered the intruder any encouragement. Her heart sank as she remembered that he was bound by no promise. But she blamed the woman

who was trying to take away her lover, while for him she had only excuses. She chafed with impatient vexation, and felt no little genuine dread as she realized that she had a dangerous rival. Chetta really believed that she had been wronged, and now conceived May Bryce to be a sly, scheming rival, whose plot it would be only fair to defeat. She resolved on an active campaign. But the situation involved so many difficulties that she was completely at a loss to know what to do. As she thought again of May's pale, frightened face, she was ashamed of the cruel shaft concealed in the dramatic recital of the evening before. She resolved to fight fair, and never surrender.

Tom Norwell would at once suspect some motive in any very marked change of her relations toward him. He was too indifferent to be urged. If she could only bring him to a declaration all would be well. Then there would be no more jealousies, no more flirting, no more heart burning. Naturally inclined to break away from conventional restraints and do the thing which she knew to be right in her own way, Miss Ingledee chafed like a caged wild animal at the artificial barriers with which society hedges a woman's love. Her impetuous nature, which had never known any real restraint, was maddened at the thought of now being thwarted in the one object of life for which all others should give way.

"Why must I wait like a slave in the market, and patiently endure the critical examination of men, till some one deigns to bid for me? Oh, I loathe the very thought, and hate myself. One word to him, and all would be plain. I should be happy for life or know the worst at once, and end this torturing suspense. Why doesn't he speak? Horace Roker would—but I fairly detest that man." With these last words she gave a vicious little stamp of her foot, rose and paced the floor with quick, nervous step. Then she bathed her throbbing temples in cold water, arranged her hair, and sat down to try to read. Scarcely had she done so when there was a knock at her door. Recognizing her father's step she called out, "Come in."

Mr. Ingledee, who had just returned to the city that day from one of his frequent trips looking after his great interests, was in no very good humor. Silas had not been doing well lately. His wild extravagance had piled up a mountain of debt, which the father had been obliged to pay. He had drawn so heavily on the parental cash of late, that Mr. Ingle-

dee felt sure there was only one way to spend so much money in so short a time, and that was by gambling. He had elicited some important facts concerning his son from Horace Roker. That gentleman made the revelations only after some rather mandatory questioning, cunningly pretending that he had not said much heretofore out of delicacy, in regard to the private and domestic affairs of his employer. But in pursuance of his policy he had not told half and had made that half look as favorable for Silas as possible. Lately Henry Ingledee had shown the marks of care. There were deep lines in his face and gray hairs appeared thickly among the jet black. His ample millions could not solace his old age, while their baleful influences were sending an idolized only son to ruin, if not to infamy.

"Roker," he had said, "I thank you for your kind assistance in this matter. I appreciate your reluctance to speak of it, but hereafter be plain. Do not spare my feelings. I rely on you. Can we not devise some means of saving my boy? He is more to me than all else." Here tears stole into the eyes of the stricken father. He could say no more.

"We will do all we can, sir," was the only reply.

At the close of the day on which this conversation occurred, Ingledee came to speak with his daughter. This girl had always been true to him, and had loved him as a dutiful, affectionate child. But now, after returning from an absence of some duration, he did not have for her the affectionate greeting which was her due. He was a disappointed man, cross and vexed, and had come to her in a complaining mood rather than to embrace a loving child. He came to a proud-spirited woman, whose temper was like the train of gunpowder ready to receive a spark. The sight of him for a moment diverted her own rebellious thoughts. She was glad to see him. She threw her arms about him and kissed him fondly.

"Papa, I am so glad you have come. Are you well?"

"Quite well, daughter. A little tired, perhaps." She saw at a second glance that something was coming and instinctively shrank away a little.

"Where is Silas?" he began.

"I do not know, papa. I have not seen him for nearly a week."

"A very affectionate household in my absence, truly," he said rather petulantly.

"It is just what it always has been, papa."

"I am not satisfied with Silas's conduct. He is going wrong. It is your duty, Chetta, to save him."

"Papa, tell me what to do and I will gladly do it. I have tried everything I could think of, but I have failed. He doesn't seem to care for me very much." Chetta said this with a touch of feeling that there had been so little in common between herself and her brother.

"It is your own fault."

"How, papa?"

"You never made enough of him. Go with him more."

"He never invites me."

"Then do as I have before suggested. Have more company here. Perhaps you could get him interested in your friends, and he might become intimate with a better class of young men. There's Bullion, Van Brocken, Brownell, Snicker, and the rest of them. Then there is Arthur Wilson. I consider him a most excellent and sensible young man."

"These young men all have an acquaintance with our family. If they do not choose to keep it up, am I to blame?"

"Perhaps they receive little encouragement. There is Wilson for instance. He is certainly a desirable acquisition to society, and I understand he has made a fortune in mining."

"Papa, is it your wish that I invite money to this house?" she asked, looking him directly in the face.

"Money moves the world," he replied evasively.

"Papa, I shall not invite Mr. Wilson to come here."

"It is of no consequence to me whether you do or not, but I should like to ask why you name him in particular, Chetta?"

"The money that has come here has not been fortunate. Look at Mr. Norwell and Mr. Garmand."

"What have I to do with their losses?" he asked, with a touch of anger.

"Perhaps we have more to do with it than we care to admit. Our example may have led them on. Familiarity is opportunity."

"Do you think," he said with painful deliberation, "that I could turn the sacred offices of hospitality to so base a purpose? Do you accuse me of this? I am ashamed of your unworthy insinuation. I am ashamed of my child."

"And I too am ashamed of myself, and my race and blood. I would lose my life if that could wipe out the stain. It

wrings my heart to confess it, but I too have blushed for shame at the mention of my father's name."

She stood proudly before him, with a fearless look of righteous indignation. This iron man, who never quailed before any one, stood aghast at these words of his daughter. He scarcely comprehended them. The blow was so unexpected that it stunned him.

"Chetta," he said finally, "you are mistaken. I never wished to take advantage of your friends, or wished you to make friends that I might use them to my advantage. It shocks me inexpressibly to know that you ever entertained such a thought. But now that the mistake is cleared up, let it pass. You have been very hasty. Let it be a lesson."

"Papa, I have not been hasty. I have made no mistake. It is you who are—are—" She hesitated as if the hateful words she was about to utter would choke her. With an effort she went on, and her speech grew more emphatic, word by word:

"You know well that you have deliberately planned to cheat others out of their money. You dare not deny it. I would rather die than make such a humiliating accusation against my own father, but you know I speak the truth." Her clear convictions of the wrongs heaped up with the family wealth, the weight of secret disgust and shame which she had borne for years as it grew daily heavier, the suppressed indignation at her father's deliberate conspiracy, all these things had burst forth in a moment. Her love of right, and conscientious regard for truth, were fully aroused. She would no longer encourage dishonesty, and would have spoken had the rack or stake stood before her. For a moment Mr. Ingledee stood in speechless astonishment, then in anger he hissed out:

"Traitor! Where did you learn this?"

"No matter where. You see I am not mistaken. I hate the very sight of money. I hate the name of money. Everything it touches in this house it curses."

"Chetta, are you mad?"

"No, I am not mad. It is you who are mad in this insane hunt for gold."

"And has it come to this? Have I nurtured a viper in my bosom to turn and sting me?"

"A viper! I am not ungrateful, father. I love you. I hate the money which has made you a slave."

"You have betrayed me."

"I never did," she answered proudly. "I scorn to tell a falsehood, or play the part of a traitor. I am not ungrateful, but I tell you plainly, I should rather live and die in poverty than revel in the wealth obtained by deception." Mr. Ingledee's eyes were fixed on his daughter with a terrible glare. His fingers twitched nervously. He trembled with passion, but strove to control himself. He hated violence. In a moment he had control of his faculties, and said in a stern, harsh tone which indicated the iron grip of a will that would suppress all passion:

"Enough! As you say! Go and live in poverty. I'll shelter no traitor under my roof." Then striving to appear indifferent he walked from the room and sought the seclusion of his private office. A great crisis had been reached in his life. One child had voluntarily gone to ruin, another had dared to thwart him, and accuse him of dishonesty. Had he felt absolutely innocent he could have forgiven her, as it was, she might go and enjoy the poverty she spoke of. He would suffer no human being to interfere with his plans, he would feed no traitor at his table. After her father left the room, Chetta Ingledee paced the floor for a few moments with the nervous, impatient manner, in which her father's visit had almost surprised her. She was laboring under a tumult of emotion which seemed to grow as she tried to reason it away, and think coherently. Suddenly she formed a decided resolution. She went to a little rosewood writing desk, and taking out paper and pen, wrote a short note. Then she rang for one of the servants and told the man to see that the note was delivered at once. It was very brief, containing only the date and the following line:

"MR. NORWELL:

Can you call for a few minutes about half-past eight this evening? I wish particularly to see you.

CHETTA INGLEDEE."

Then she wrote, in a rapid, business-like hand that betrayed little of the excitement under which she had so recently labored, two other notes, which she addressed and placed in a little drawer of the desk.

She was calmer now, and again tried to read but could not fix her mind on the book, and found herself repeating line after line without being aware of a single thought contained in them. She called a servant and asked if Mr. Ingledee had

dined yet. On receiving an affirmative reply, Chetta gave her toilet a few little touches, and went down to the family dining room. There she asked the servant to bring her a bit of chicken and a cup of tea. These, with bread and butter, constituted a light dinner which was soon dispatched.

Having learned that her father had gone out, she passed from one room to another, looking at the rich furniture, and the beautiful decorations. She lingered for a moment in the "White and Gold" saloon apparently studying beauties which she had seen a thousand times before. Then she passed into the little parlor where her mother's portrait hung. Before this she paused for a time in deep reflection, as she scanned the saddened lineaments of her dead parent. A calm came over the features of the living, which seemed to be as profound as that of the immobile features on the canvas. She passed up the broad marble stairway to her apartments on the second floor. She was alone in the great house excepting the servants. She mused, "Will he speak when this opportunity is offered, which will be the last he may ever have?"

Tom Norwell received Chetta's note just as he was about to start to call on May Bryce. He had promised to call on her and spend the evening. By going early he could fulfill his engagement and afterward call in answer to this inexplicable note which greatly puzzled him. May Bryce too, had passed the day tormented by distressing doubts. Chetta Ingledee's reference to the fate of Francesca da Rimini had, for a moment, filled her with terror, and she had shown her fear to her triumphant rival. She no longer had any doubt that Chetta was a rival, and she feared the superior tactics of this world-wise, passionate woman. She realized that she herself was not capable of any stratagems, or finely spun wiles to hold her lover. She could rely only on—well, she could not tell what had won him at first. She had very few weapons, and those poor ones, she thought, while her antagonist had a whole arsenal. It was true that Chetta's ruse to discover May's relations to Norwell, in itself, amounted to nothing. It was a historical incident which could have no parallel in the present instance, but it indicated the aggressive nature of the foe. May never for a moment really confessed to herself that she doubted Norwell, but she was obliged to confess that she greatly feared Chetta Ingledee.

Norwell came and spent half an hour with his Prairie Flower, as he still persisted in calling her, despite her protes-

tations that it was very foolish. At length, he suddenly announced that he was obliged to take his leave.

"Why, Tom, I thought you were to spend the evening here," she exclaimed, in surprise.

"So I was, but I have been unexpectedly called away on business."

"Tom, Alice says you gentlemen sometimes make business an excuse when you wish to go to the club or somewhere else and have your fun all to yourselves."

"Alice sometimes talks nonsense."

"Do I bore you, dear?"

"No, certainly not, little girl. What ever put that into your head?"

"Then why don't you stay awhile longer? Arthur and Alice will be back soon."

"But I say I have been called away unexpectedly. Surely you will believe me."

"Yes, Tom, I believe you. Would you mind telling me where you are going?"

"I can't do that, May." He was not exactly at ease, and she saw it.

"Sometime," he continued, by way of putting her off, "we shall not have any secrets, you know, but this time I cannot tell you." He left abruptly.

May sat in thought. Had she known his errand, it would have broken her heart. She had heard that true love never ran smooth. Hers had run for one summer in a broad, deep current without a ripple. Now it was breaking into the plunging rapids which apparently led only to jagged rocks, seething whirlpools, and perhaps dark disaster. A sudden revulsion of feeling came over her. For a moment it seemed as if all light had gone out of the world. She wished she had never seen New York, or mingled in its elegant society. She almost wished she had never met Tom Norwell. But that thought she instantly repented of, for then she would never have known that sweetest of all pleasures, first love, for her the only love possible. Alice and Arthur returned presently, and by their cheerful conversation and sunny mood soon restored her to good humor. In their love there were no doubts, no secrets, no anxieties, no raptures. It was a powerful current that flowed the same every day. It had its eddies, and occasionally a ripple, but these only showed that it was an active, progressive principle.

Norwell went directly to the Ingledee residence, and was shown into the parlor.

"I sent for you, Tom," Chetta began.

"Yes, I got your note."

"You are an old friend, you know."

"Of course, and I am always at your service."

She drew one of the luxurious, velvet-cushioned easy chairs for him, and another facing it, for herself. Then for a few minutes they engaged in conversation on commonplace subjects. She hardly knew how to begin, and several times abandoned entirely the project she had in mind, only to return to it. He saw she was not at ease, and waited for her to begin. At last, drawing nearer, she said:

"Mr. Norwell, events have transpired lately, which will make great changes in my future."

"Yes?" he answered, with curiosity aroused.

"I shall go South for a time."

"I wish I could go, too, during these disagreeable winter months."

"Why not?" she asked, banteringly, as she looked him full in the face.

He could only interpret her question literally, and replied:

"Too expensive."

"I shall go in a very plain way." Then, lest Tom should wonder at that, she added, "Papa wishes it so."

"Isn't this unexpected?" She had never gone off alone in this way, and he wondered at it since her father or brother were not to accompany her.

"It was all arranged to-day. As my first and, I trust, best friend, I wished you to know it at once." He was puzzled no little, but said nothing.

"Tom, I have often thought of our friendship. It has been so close that you scarcely seem like any other friend to me." A slight color tinged her cheek, but he gave no sign of having noticed it.

"Miss Ingledee" (she had called him Tom, and he would take no notice of that), "I can never thank you sufficiently for all that you have done for me. You have aided me when no others could. I can never repay you, I fear."

"Gratitude pays the debts of friendship. Other debts should be paid in kind." She was thinking of the debt of love, and now his thoughts were with hers. He felt guilty and embarrassed. He did not know what answer to make, so said nothing. After a moment's pause, she added:

"Do you think I could do otherwise than assist you? I shall always do so if the future leaves it in my power."

"I shall never forget your kindness, Miss Ingledee."

And was this all his answer? Now when she had told him she was about to leave, and hinted that it might make a great difference in their future, he sat impassioned as a stone, and talked of gratitude. Was he putting her off purposely, or was it downright stupidity? She was annoyed, but determined to give him a last chance to speak. But he was not the dolt his conduct might have indicated. He saw her purpose clearly now. He saw his own terrible mistake in neglecting this woman whom he had once loved. It was now too late; he had pledged his affections elsewhere, and would loyally conceal his disappointment and marry the woman he had promised. Here was the long-expected crisis. She was going away, and he must now give her to understand that nothing but friendship could henceforth exist between them. To have announced his engagement then and there would have settled the matter forever. But it would also have exposed his weak trifling, so he could not summon courage to do the only manly thing to be done.

"Papa has always thought a great deal of you."

"I know it, and shall not forget it."

"It is hard for old friends to part. I shall be absent a long time, I think."

"It is hard. But such things must occur. Chetta, we have been good friends all our lives. But we could not be friends always. Sometime the best of friends must part. They cannot be together forever, neither can we. No, that is impossible." He looked her full in the face, and slowly repeated: "That is impossible." Then he took her hand, and, holding it a moment, said very kindly: "I wish you a very pleasant journey. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," she replied, and he was gone.

She saw now that he understood her, and that he had loved her. But what was the meaning of the word impossible? She could not believe that he was promised to that other woman, while he had still kept in correspondence with her. It must be that he would not marry her because he was poor. Then it suddenly flashed across her mind that in the step she was about to take she herself would be poor. Sometime maybe they might meet again on equal terms, and still be happy. Still hope lingered in her heart.

It was not yet nine o'clock. By taking a hack, she could reach Pipe Malley & Co.'s store before they closed. Passing out at a side door, she gained the street, hailed a hackman, and was soon down town, amid the dirty streets of that vicinity. She alighted, and entered the store at once.

The twins, since we first made their acquaintance, have grown from boys to great strapping youths. Pipe is now neatly attired in a business suit, as becomes the proprietor of a flourishing retail shop. He even wears a watch and stylish gold-plate chain. Quill is still engaged in the business of wearing out his brother's old clothes. As the boy rapidly increases in length, while the pantaloons, through an obvious defect in nature's machinery do not, it is with difficulty that Quill persuades his socks and the legs of his pantaloons to meet on friendly terms. On the present occasion Pipe looking through the door and seeing a hack drive up, called out quickly:

"Quill, there's a lady comin'. Let up on them figs." Pipe had managed to find time to attend a night school a good deal and had really laid in a considerable store of knowledge, but unfortunately his ideas of grammar were purely theoretical, like those of most people whose study of the anatomy of English speech is confined to rattling the dry bones of its skeleton once per day for a fixed period, after which the skeleton is relegated, not to the closet along with the family skeleton, but to the next class in anatomy. Grammar apparently is not an *applied* science.

"Good-evening, Miss Ingledee," said Pipe, as he met his teacher at the door. "We're awful glad to see you."

"Good-evening, Pipe."

"Quill, why don't you come out from behind the counter and speak to Miss Ingledee?"

Quill, whose natural bashfulness always kept him in the background, now hastily pulled up his hose to a junction with his pantaloons and came forward to speak to Chetta. His hands and face were, as regards cleanliness, greatly in advance of their former condition, though Pipe had remarked during the evening while in a surly mood that they were hardly passable, and to an observer it might seem as if the criticism had a basis of truth. By dint of untiring effort, however, Pipe had succeeded at length in teaching Quill that it was not the proper thing to wipe his mouth with the back of his hand. Quill was still on salary, and had a glimmering prospect of

being a partner when he had advanced a little further along the road to cleanliness, industry and financial responsibility. Pipe rigidly insisted that Quill must "brace up" and be somebody. "He would have no slouch of a partner."

"Quill, how are you getting along learning the business?" asked Chetta.

"Good enough, I guess," he answered sheepishly, as he glanced furtively toward his shabby and insufficient clothing. At Sunday school a goodly portion of his person was concealed by the seat in front of him. Now he was sure that she saw the deficiencies in his make-up. He would have given all he was worth, which was very little, indeed, to be dressed up like Pipe in a new suit. But that was only for "his betters," he supposed, as Pipe had once taken the pains to inform him in a hasty moment when the twins were exchanging some of those delicate compliments that fond relatives sometimes lavish on one another in private. Quill stood there plainly before her and blushed. Pipe, in calling him from behind the counter, had cruelly though unintentionally exposed him. The visitor, however, apparently noticed neither his clothes nor his embarrasment. He knew that she saw both and was grateful to her for turning to look at some fruit.

"Quill, remember what I said about helping you. When you have done your part I will do mine. Pipe, I came to ask a favor of you."

"I'll do it with pleasure, Miss Ingledee."

"I shall not be at the Mission School next Sunday. I expect to be out of the city. Please give this note to Mr. Hardin, the superintendent, and he will find you another teacher. Try to be as good to her as you have been to me."

"An' ain't you comin' back at all?"

"Not for a good while, Pipe."

"I tell you I'm dreadful sorry you're goin'."

"You'll find another teacher as good, I think."

"Don't want another as good. We want you."

"Since you can't have me, try to help the new one, will you?"

"I'll see that the fellers behaves," confidently answered Pipe. The class had grown during the years of Miss Ingledee's teaching till the boys who at first were, in their own slang dialect, "kids," had now progressed to the adolescent condition of "fellers," the twins being among the oldest, and

Pipe, by virtue of his position as a business man, a leader among them.

"That's right, Pipe. Thank you."

"Are you goin' fur?"

"I am going away," said Chetta evasively. "May be gone for a long time."

"Lemme put up some oranges fur you in a paper. They're awful nice. Best sweet Floridas. They'll keep." He tossed half a dozen into a paper sack. "They'll be poorty nice in the cars when it's dusty."

She took them, and a tear stole down her cheek. These street waifs that under her care had slowly been growing into a better manhood, seemed after all, her best friends. She rejoiced that she had done such a work. Life for her had not been all in vain. It was doubtful if all her father's millions had ever done so good a deed. She longed to tell these boys that she was going away and never expected to see them again, but that might defeat her plans. Hastily thanking Pipe for the fruit, she shook hands with them both and merely saying, "Good-bye. Be good to your new teacher," was gone.

Chetta drove directly home, and telling the hackman to call for her again at twelve, went to her room. She spent the intervening hour packing in a large valise her most useful articles of clothing. Her expensive jewelry she would not touch, but took a few articles of lesser value. At twelve o'clock she left the house noiselessly by a side door, drove to the Pennsylvania Railroad ferry, and took a train for Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XLV.

MR. ROKER STARTLES CERTAIN FOLKS GREATLY BY HIS THEORY OF AN ELOPEMENT.—HE PAYS A VISIT TO MAY BRYCE.—DEATH OF SILAS INGLEDEE.

Next morning Mr. Ingledee sat down to his breakfast at the usual hour. He unfolded his paper and sipped his coffee as he read the news. He still showed traces of the anger which had burst forth the day before. This was not dis-

played in snappish remarks to the servants. Henry Ingledee was a man who cared but little for the petty things of life. He never grumbled over the minor details of his household or found fault if his toast was not browned to the precise shade. He was above such contemptible conduct as habitual grumbling. But care was beginning to show traces of her constant presence with him now. This morning his face looked unusually grave. He dispatched his breakfast in silence, occasionally looking toward the door. He expected his daughter. In truth, Mr. Ingledee regretted the scene of the evening before, though he still argued to himself the necessity of rebuking the utterances of his child. In all else she had been a dutiful daughter, but on this one point he would have no disloyalty, or, at least, interference. He could allow no aspersions on his business or his motives. He thought this a severe rebuke which would doubtless render any further admonitions of the same kind unnecessary. Still Chetta did not come, and Mr. Ingledee was quite through with his breakfast. He told a servant to go and call Miss Ingledee.

In a few minutes the girl returned, saying that her knock had received no answer. He sent her to knock again and open the door if it were not locked. Immediately the girl returned, saying that Miss Ingledee had not spent the night in her room. She handed the master two letters, one directed to himself and the other to Silas. Instantly he had a prescience of what had occurred. He hastily tore open the note and read:

"DEAR PAPA:

I am going away forever. Do not think too hard of me. I would have given anything to spare you the pain I caused you. But the duty to right and to God is above all others. I cannot think differently about your business and your money. Forgive me for saying so. I love you dearly, and shall never forget that you are my father, but we could not be happy together now.

So good-bye.

CHETTA."

Mr. Ingledee read the note through deliberately, and then calling the servant, told her to take Mr. Silas's note, and see if he was in. If he was, ask him to come down at once. Mr. Silas happened to be in and in bed. Taking the note from the servant, he opened it and received a very great surprise from its contents. It read as follows:

"DEAR BROTHER:

Papa and I have had a quarrel. I can stay here no longer. It would be misery for both. I am very sorry to leave you forever. Please do, for my sake, try to be a better boy. Papa can easily spare me, but if anything should happen you I think it would kill him. Will you try? Please forgive the faults of your sister, and try to remember her kindly. Good-bye, dear boy.

Your Loving Sister,

CHETTA."

With his toilet in a very incomplete state, Silas hastened down to his father's private office.

"What is the meaning of all this?" he asked excitedly.

In reply, Mr. Ingledee handed Silas the note addressed to the father, while he took the one addressed to his son. After perusing the note, Silas said:

"But I don't understand it at all."

"It is soon made plain. Your sister chose to impugn my business motives, and I reproved her rather severely. She has not taken it kindly, that is all."

"But what did you say to her, father?" persisted Silas.

"I shall allow no child who eats my bread, to say it was obtained dishonestly. I think I told her I should harbor no traitor."

"Don't you think that was a little rough on Chet? You know she's full of mettle."

"She must learn duty and obedience."

"Hang it all, what's the use of paying any attention to the thoughtless words of a girl?"

"They were not thoughtless words. They were very deliberate, on the contrary."

"Well, suppose they were. It's a woman's way to talk. You've been too severe on her. Suppose she did say that stock operations are not always straight. Don't we know it to be a fact? And doesn't the public know it?"

"What! Are you going to harp the same tune? Beware! I tell you I will not have it." But the young man was by no means intimidated by the threat. In coolness and specious insinuating logic he was fully the equal of his father, while his knowledge of the world was a valuable auxiliary just now.

"Now, father," he said deprecatingly, "do not misunderstand me. I am only saying what we know about our business. I'm not harping it to the world, and I'm not going back on the business. But facts are facts, just the same. Now if

you will allow me to express my plain opinion of this business I say that I think you have made a deuce of a bad break."

"I have simply done nothing, sir."

"Chet hasn't deserved this," said Silas, paying no attention to the interruption. "If you had given me such a scorching there would have been more propriety in it—at least everybody thinks so, and I know my feelings could stand it, and hers couldn't."

"If she had come to me and asked to go away for a year I should have made an ample provision. She is wilful and ungrateful."

"She would beg before she would ask for a thing in that way."

"Well, now that it is over, there's no use discussing the subject further," said Mr. Ingledee, trying to dismiss the matter summarily. In truth he felt that he was in the wrong partly at least, but he would not openly admit it just yet.

"But it isn't over, father. We must get Chetta back, and that will perhaps be no easy matter."

"She left of her own accord. She may come back the same way. I will have nothing further to do with the affair."

"Now, father, you are unreasonable. We must get her back. I shall have all the detectives in the country engaged before I'll give up the case."

"Do as you please, Silas, but do it in your own name. I'll pay the bills if they are reasonable, but that is all." For the sake of the family name Mr. Ingledee was willing to do so much.

He drove down town to the office and called Roker in at once. The two had a private interview of considerable length. Roker was greatly puzzled and considerably disconcerted at the disappearance of the young lady. Lately he flattered himself that he was progressing in his own suit, almost imperceptibly he knew, and more by the lever of intimacy than through any evidences she gave of caring for this frigid gentleman who kept his society manners continually on ice. Mr. Ingledee was not very explicit in revealing the details of the scene between himself and his daughter. So far as Roker heard them, he thought they were not sufficient cause for the flight. Then Roker hinted at an elopement with Tom Norwell. This greatly surprised Mr. Ingledee. He knew in his heart that his daughter had ample cause in his words for leaving her home. But he was surprised at Roker's suggestion

of elopement, and thought the anger exhibited by that gentleman highly commendable in a friend of the family. Roker was unsparing in his denunciation, and said hard things of Norwell in his rage. Ingledee finally reminded him that this idea was at best only a surmise. He was unwilling to believe this of Norwell, who was in the main an excellent young man, he thought. Roker, however, convinced Mr. Ingledee finally that it was best to take active measures for recovering the fugitive.

On the day following Chetta Ingledee's flight, Tom Norwell called at the quiet boarding-house where his sister and May Bryce lived. His call was very brief. He had come to tell them that business would take him from the city for a few days, as he intended going to Pennsylvania. With these few words of explanation, he left the women, who thought there was nothing strange about the matter.

On the same evening Mr. Horace Roker called and inquired for Miss Bryce. He had a speaking acquaintance with both of the young ladies, but scarcely a calling acquaintance. However, May thought little of this, having been brought up where the formalities of etiquette were often ignored. Horace Roker never affected to play the smiling, bowing, facile beau who is always happy in the society of ladies, regardless of time or circumstance. He never could have played that role if he had chosen. His was not a face that smiles adorned, and his smirk would have been a hideous thing. Faultless dress and extreme gentility were his strong points with the fair sex.

He chatted pleasantly for some time with Miss Bryce, talked about her country home, asked her how she liked the city, mentioned society events casually, and on the whole, greatly entertained her. Then he remarked that he must be going soon. He wished to drop in at the Argosy Club, hoping to meet Mr. Norwell. May now informed him that his visit would be fruitless, as Mr. Norwell had left town for a few days. This was a startling corroboration of Roker's elopement theory, but he exhibited no surprise on receiving the important news. Thanking her for the information, Roker still seemed in no hurry to go, but continued the conversation until he artfully obtained a confirmation of his surmise that May knew more about Tom Norwell than she cared to confess. He changed the conversation abruptly, and asked her if she had heard the latest sensation.

"No, what is it, Mr. Roker?"

"Miss Ingledee, the heiress, disappeared last night unaccountably." He narrowly watched her as he said this. May could not conceal some agitation at the startling intelligence.

"Disappeared? How?"

"She has gone, run away from home, that's all. There is an evening paper containing a brief account of the affair." He pulled the paper from his pocket and handed it to her.

"What is the cause of such strange conduct on her part, Mr. Roker?"

"Nobody seems to know. It may be domestic difficulties, maybe there is some other reason."

May was completely bewildered. Roker, however, had learned, first, that May Bryce was in love with Tom Norwell, as he was almost assured beforehand; second, that she recognized Miss Ingledee as a rival, and feared her moreover, as he had suspected; third, that she was ignorant of Norwell's real whereabouts; lastly, he could rely on her as an active ally of his own. Roker finally took his leave, and May perused the provokingly indefinite article in the paper.

Alice came in and together they reread it, but they were unable to solve the mystery. May scarcely knew whether to be secretly pleased at her rival's disappearance or not. Suddenly her eye caught the statement that a hackman had driven the young lady to the Pennsylvania railroad ferry. With alarm she thought of Norwell's trip to Pennsylvania, his sudden departure, his hasty leave-taking of the night before, and his refusal to tell her where he was going. "Oh, Alice, read that." She turned deadly pale, and would have fallen had not Alice caught her and led her to a chair. Alice glanced at the ominous line, then said softly:

"Poor child, I see it all now. My brother has your heart, and is not behaving well. He has failed to keep his promise."

As May attempted to interrupt her, she went on: "I see it all; you would apologize for him."

"Do you think—that—he would do that?" said May faintly.

"No, May; calm yourself. He would never elope with that girl. It would be madness, knowing what Mr. Ingledee is. He has not done that. It must be merely a disagreeable coincidence. Arthur may know more of his trip. I will send for him." She sat down and hastily wrote a note.

"ARTHUR:

Please come over immediately. I must see you to-night.

ALICE NORWELL."

She dispatched this at once to Wilson's hotel, which was a fashionable one up town.

The two women sat and talked over these strange events and wondered. Alice succeeded in quieting May's fears. Now that she shared May's secret, Alice felt the tender devotion of a loving sister toward this girl who had so long meekly endured a great wrong. She was secretly indignant with her brother for his inexcusable conduct, but this was no time to indulge in censure. May needed comfort more. At last they agreed that their scare was very absurd. A thousand men might go to the Pennsylvania depot without explaining the object of their journey. But that was no evidence that each intended to elope with a woman. It occurred to Alice that some excuse would be necessary to explain her hasty sending for Wilson. She would ask him to tell her what he knew of Miss Ingledee's disappearance, and whether there was anything later known.

Wilson appeared somewhat surprised to find himself summoned by his lady love at ten o'clock at night, to talk over a matter in which she had no apparent interest beyond curiosity. He had very little to tell. Alice soon inquired if he knew the object of Tom's visit.

"Has he not told you?"

"No, we have few confidences on business matters now."

"It is somewhat of a secret, in fact, and you ladies need not repeat it. He and I think of forming a co-partnership of some kind,—we scarcely know what yet. Just now Tom has gone to Pennsylvania to look at some oil lands we think of buying."

This explanation of Norwell's business afforded the ladies inexpressible relief. Their spirits rose, they jested, chatted and laughed, till they fairly surprised Wilson with their gayety. He thought they had looked uneasy when he first came, in fact, almost anxious. Now they oscillated to the opposite extreme without apparent cause. He soon took his departure, vowing to himself that woman is a mulitiplied conundrum with a thousand answers, and wondering why he had been sent for at all.

After two or three days' reflection, Mr. Ingledee concluded that his daughter's sudden desertion of her home was only a caprice, like that for example of entertaining ragged newsboys in the Ingledee mansion. He felt sure that his view would eventually prove the correct one. The young

lady would return in due time when she found that no particular fuss was made about her absence. No young lady, he thought, would voluntarily surrender her portion in so many millions. Silas, who knew his sister better, held a different opinion, and had quietly put a detective agency in possession of all the facts, with instructions to find his sister.

Mr. Ingledee, in his assertive confidence of always controlling the situation, which was begotten of many years of uniform success, was not greatly troubled by the unexpected episode which had occurred in his family. But a dreadful event was about to take place which at one blow would extinguish the hope of a lifetime and leave this bold, designing man a baffled, heart-broken one.

Silas Ingledee had often entertained in regal style, on board the family yacht, the "Golden Gate." In turn he had numerous invitations to participate in pleasure excursions and festivities on board other yachts. A few days after Chetta's disappearance, a young gentleman who had lately inherited great wealth, invited Silas Ingledee to be present with a few others, at the trial trip of his new fast-sailing yacht, "Ora," which had just been completed. A favorable breeze carried the handsome craft down the bay toward the ocean. The young men were delighted with her sailing qualities. The Ora carried a perfect cloud of canvas, and moved over the water withthe grace of a bird and the instinct of a living thing. The masts leaned before the wind at what a land-lubber would have considered a very dangerous angle. Suddenly, while tacking, a squall struck the vessel and capsized her squarely on her beam ends. The great spread of sail struck the water and seemed to adhere to it. The vessel quivered, but could not right herself. The sea poured into the cabin and hold. All was excitement on board, but before a single effective measure for safety could be taken the Ora had gone down, leaving some twenty persons struggling in the water. Some clung to a boat that floated bottom up. Others sustained themselves by swimming until picked up by the boats of a craft that fortunately was near. Three persons were drowned, and among them Silas Ingledee.

The bodies were brought to the city, and the relatives at once notified. Mr. Ingledee read the message announcing his son's death in a dazed sort of stupor. His mental faculties seemed suspended. "*Dead!*" he exclaimed. "That can not be; my brain is not clear, it must mean *well*." He tried to

rouse his vision and his thoughts to a clearer perception of the words on the paper before him. He looked again at the fatal buff slip with the well-known printed head of the telegraph company. The writing seemed indistinct, but gradually grew so plain there could be no mistake. *Dead* was the awful word before him. Dead! Dead! The brief message: "Yacht Ora sunk, Silas Ingledee among the dead," could not be mistaken. Its clear, concise, business phraseology seemed almost brutal. "Dead?" he exclaimed again, half aloud, "My son dead! No it cannot be. God surely would not take all I hold dear." He sat for a few minutes, apparently incapable of action or resolution. Then he touched a button, and a messenger came.

"Call Mr. Roker." Roker came at once.

"Roker, this needs attention. Will you kindly arrange for everything?" Roker read the few fatal words, and replied:

"This is dreadful." He looked fixedly at the message for a moment, then glanced at the stricken man before him, and said with as much kindness as he was capable of: "Try to bear this terrible blow, Mr. Ingledee. I will see to everything."

For three days the great house lay in the silence of deepest mourning. The closed blinds admitted but a dim light that left everything in a solemn gloom. Servants glided noiselessly over the luxurious carpets, and through the corridors. The undertaker and his men performed their duties in silence. Once Mr. Ingledee had gone to look at the features of his dead boy. He stood like a statue gazing at the lifeless clay before him, uttering no sound, speechless, motionless, tearless. The placid features of the dead, which wore a look of repose they never had assumed in life, were scarcely more fixed than the figure of the stricken parent. Then Roker, covering gently the face of the dead, led the father away. There was only this man to comfort these moments of extreme anguish. Only this man! And what was he? One who, bearing no malice toward the dead man, rejoiced that he was gone. Could poverty of friendship be more extreme? Could an expiring slave be poorer than the great millionaire was now? No, a fellow slave would close his eyes for love of a dying comrade. But Horace Roker did his duty faithfully, scrupulously, and perhaps in that his superior got all he had any right to expect. He was very rich in gold, very poor in the love of his fellow men.

Then came the funeral. The turn-out of the moneyed great was very large. The slowly-moving line of splendid equipages was a sight most solemn and impressive. The procession fell in and formed in the direction that it took at the grand ball in the same house once not many years ago. The long line of handsome carriages represented millions as it wound slowly toward the city of the dead, where millions avail naught, there to lay the hopes of a money king away forever.

Horace Roker suggested to Mr. Ingledee that travel might perhaps be the best means of softening his bereavement. But the stricken man could not bear the idea of exhibiting his grief in public places amid the worry and confusion of travel. He deemed it best to divert his woe-burdened thoughts by engaging in the business of his life. In one week he went to the office a broken man, but still a man of definite and aggressive purpose. He would continue to pile up money for the love of it, and to give himself active employment. There was nothing else for him to do. He could not in his present condition sit down and enjoy the fruits of his labor, because the habits of a lifetime had unfitted him for the quiet enjoyments and pursuits, that so well become old age. Still vigorous in mind and body, he must give definite employment to his restless activity. There was nothing else to do but enlarge his vaults and gather in a few more bundles of stocks and bonds, to own a few more railroads. Bereavement had not taught him the lesson of charity, and it would go hard with the unfortunate man who attempted to bar the way of Mr. Ingledee to the consummation of any of his plans.

A few days after the funeral Mr. Ingledee discovered among his letters one that gave him a sudden start. It was from his daughter, and read:

"DEAR PAPA:

I have heard the dreadful news through the papers. I know you will forgive me for intruding on your grief when you remember that it is mine, too. I have a right to share it, and I claim my right, though I cannot be with you to join in your sorrow. Papa, try to think everything for the best, and ordered by Him who orders all things wisely.

CHETTA."

He crushed the letter nervously, and thought its consolation almost a gibe to his misery.

"'Try to think everything for the best.' No, I cannot do that. Why should I, who have the means to gratify every

wish of a child, have my children taken away, while some penniless beggar is blessed with a dozen or more? I see no justice in it." But his heart softened a little toward his remaining child. It was sweet to think that she still remembered him. Had she appeared before him then he would have taken her to his arms freely. The same day he gave the letter to Roker. It would perhaps serve as some clue to her whereabouts in the end.

"I scarcely see how," he replied. "There is no address in the letter or legible postmark on the envelope, except the receiving stamp of the Philadelphia office."

"At any rate, do what you can, Roker. Hand it to the Detective Agency. Home is the place for her now."

"I think so too, sir." Roker undertook this commission very willingly. Death had performed one-half of the work necessary to the success of his plans. It was sudden, awful, and effectual. It startled Roker as he thought of his own guilty wishes, but for this death he was not responsible, and the event was very welcome. He had now only to pursue the other half of the enterprise to a successful termination. He still hoped to be the son-in-law of a railway king.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AN UNENDING CONFLICT

It is again midsummer. Some months ago Alice Norwell became happy Mrs. Wilson. The honeymoon of this well-mated couple promises to last many months longer, and far beyond the conventional period. May Bryce is again in her distant country home. Wilson and Norwell have formed a partnership and are now about to set out for the oil regions of Pennsylvania, to make some investments heretofore alluded to.

Business was not in a healthful condition throughout the nation. The business men of the country bitterly complained of hard times. Thousands of laborers were out of employment, and thousands of employes of the great railroads were threatened with a reduction of wages.

As Norwell and Wilson passed through Pennsylvania

they saw evidences of the prevailing distress on every hand. In the coal regions thousands of miners were out of employment and other thousands working for starvation wages. The few great coal companies had gradually grabbed and held the fuel supply of a continent, claiming as private property the priceless treasures which God has stored in the earth as the heritage of all mankind. With equal justice they could claim as their own the air and the sunlight. They would gladly tax those, too, if there was any way of fencing them in so the public could not get at them.

Here in this region of vast mineral resources was illustrated again the never-ending conflict between the people and the daring freebooters who would seize the people's rights. It is a contest as old as history, doubtless much older. It began in the days when kings, by "divine right," owned the persons, property, and the very souls, of their subjects. *Divine right!* What cruel wrongs and awful deeds of crime have been perpetrated in the name of religion! What wars, what rapine, what sickening oppression! To-day men no longer profane the name of God by calling it to shield their acts of pillage. They take without a pretense, and make no apologies. This contest, begun in divine right, continued during the weary centuries when the sword made right, and slavery was the lot of the vanquished; in the days when Roman savagery slaughtered, spoiled and scourged a bleeding world that one imperial city might exalt herself in palaces, revel in luxury, riot in sin, and sink her loathsome carcass in nameless degradation. It continued while the brawling, licentious nobility of the later ages decked themselves in silks, velvets and jewels, and a miserable peasantry lived in hovels, more fit for wild beasts than men. It continues to-day when the nobleman of Europe thinks it just that he should own twenty thousand acres of land, while millions of his impoverished countrymen have none, and when the money king of the new world thinks he should have at least ten millions, which means that nearly ten thousand of his countrymen shall have nothing but rags.* This struggle will end only with the human race. Our own fair land has seen it fiercely fought, and all the more dangerous to liberty because cunningly disguised. Our pirates fly no black flag. They are only ordinary peaceful citizens. They are called gentlemen.

*Note 7.—Accumulation of wealth.

They pose as men of enterprise and public spirit. No one will dispute the enterprise. Their first move against the public is to secure a valuable charter of some kind, authorizing them to build some great public work. This exceedingly liberal charter is granted by ignorant, careless or corrupt legislators. And a privilege once granted is a contract which must be held sacred, and so the pirate sits forever entrenched behind the law. He piles up millions, and is now ready to fight successfully all hostile legislation. He is perfectly willing to litigate because he knows well the power of money, and the sort of stuff juries and judges are sometimes made of.* He fights his taxes because it is far cheaper than to pay them.

The French nobility, by "divine right," were exempt from taxation. The peasantry was made purposely to pay bills. Our pirates levy blackmail by means of a schedule of rates. Overcharges and rebates are a much more genteel way than the old method of springing from a thicket, and levying it at the point of a pistol. It is more scientific, more sweeping in its scope, and more profitable. The highwayman of old could hold up only one unfortunate at a time. The highwayman of to-day bids a whole nation stand and deliver. Meantime the people look on indifferently. They have enough as a rule, and are apparently grateful that our genteel robbers have left us so much. The Roman or the feudal baron left nothing. We have only to wait long enough and, emboldened by success, doubtless our long-headed princely thieves will devise means to take all, leaving us nothing.†

It may be urged that this is an exaggerated picture. It is true to history. Man is ever merciless to man, and unfortunately republican government has not changed human nature. Perhaps some one fancies he sees here the grisly specter of communism. It is not here. The rights of the people are one thing, the incendiary utterances of conspirators quite another thing. The latter deserve to be severely dealt with when dynamite is their only argument. At the same time, let the millionaire law-breaker receive the just penalty of his crimes.

The outrages of the striking miners were to be condemned and regretted. An unjustifiable strike may become a crime when its far-reaching consequences are considered. But what

*Note 15.—Intimidation of courts.
†Note 16.—Untaxable property.

is to be said of the soulless corporations who drove these men to strike! The scenes of utter wretchedness and squalid suffering witnessed in the mining regions, beggared belief and equaled many similar instances recorded in the over-populated old world. Strong men sat idle day by day, and saw their children cry for bread in a land where the farmer often burns his corn because he can get nothing for it. In hundreds of instances a wholesome meal had not been eaten in weeks. What was the cause of all this suffering? Was there no demand for coal? Excessive wealth in the hands of the few had engendered an excessive greed on the part of capital. Thousands of miles of railroad for which there was no immediate necessity had been built, greatly stimulating the iron trade, and with it the production of coal. The resources of the country were developed far beyond the needs of commerce. As a consequence the great corporations could no longer pay dividends on their inflated capital. The coal companies agreed to limit production, force up the price and cut wages.*

Let no one misunderstand the tenor of these remarks upon the abuse of corporate power. It will no doubt be advanced by the friends of these rich grabbers that railroads and other great incorporated enterprises are a necessity. This no one denies. Such persons will perhaps triumphantly point to the fact that a large proportion of all the railroads in the United States have gone into bankruptcy, and that others have never paid a dividend.† This is well understood and not disputed. No attack whatever is made upon the railroad system of transportation, nor upon the thousands of hard-working, honest railroad employes. The danger lies not in the system, but in the abuse of it. When it is urged that great corporations pay but a small per cent. on the investment it may be answered that the investment is largely fictitious, consisting of a large proportion of watered stock, which represents no value whatever, and has been issued merely to conceal the enormous profit on the actual capital.‡

When it is urged that railroads are constantly going into bankruptcy it may be answered that such bankruptcy is often an additional evidence that dishonest men are plundering the road. There are more effectual ways of killing a dog than attempting to choke him to death with butter. So there are

*Note 17.—The Hocking Valley strike.
†Note 14.—Profits of corporations.
‡Note 18.—Actual cost of railroads.—Example the Mexican National.

more effectual ways of robbing a railroad than to break into its vaults by the aid of a dark lantern and crowbar. Fast freight lines and other barnacle devices, extravagant salaries and fictitious expenses, may absorb all the earnings, and leave nothing for the mass of stockholders who are not on the *inside*. Another method is to form a combination against the road, refuse to pro-rate with it, cut rates, drive it to the wall, and then absorb it into the system. These are only examples of what may be done in that line.

Some paid agent of the railroad interest, or some individual who has been riding on a free pass most of his life, will doubtless say here, with the air of a man who knows all about the subject, that the cost of railroad transportation has steadily declined in this country for the last twenty years, and is now cheaper than ever before. Grant it. Well, does not that demolish your anti-monopoly argument completely? Not at all. The railroads now carry for millions, where they once carried for thousands. Doing business on such a great scale they can afford to transact it cheaper. Has not the price of clothing, flour, clocks, dry goods, and, in short, everything else been reduced, too?

But our monopoly advocate may say here that trunk lines with difficulty pay expenses during periods of financial depression. Let the facts speak for themselves. The New York Central & Hudson River Railroad, probably the best railway property in the world, lately issued several millions in bonds for purposes that really should have been provided for out of the earnings. Is the New York Central a poor investment? If it is, why does the man who has for years controlled it, William H. Vanderbilt, admit that he is probably the richest man in the world? When a business man and private citizen is pinched by hard times he must squeeze through as best he can, or close his doors. The railway king has the impudence to ask the public to be lenient with him because forsooth his great property is not paying very well just now. He issues a few millions of bonds to pay his losses, and those bonds are an addition to the capital on which the public must pay interest.* *A few facts on this question stand out unchallenged, even by the most active apologist of transportation monopolies.*

It is a fact that the government subsidies to the Pacific

*Note 19.—Who meets their losses.

railroads were so liberal as practically to give these great highways to the projectors who were mainly impecunious adventurers.

It is a fact that bribery was resorted to in order to obtain from Congress such valuable concessions. The Credit Mobilier investigation establishes this point conclusively

It is a fact that the Standard Oil Company, whose projectors had but a few thousands to begin on, became worth millions in an incredibly short time; that they drove nearly all rivals out of business, and completely monopolized the oil trade of the whole country. Their profits are known to have been at one time a million a month.

It is a fact that Jay Gould and other Wall Street operators have, by manipulating railway and other securities, piled up fabulous millions in a few years, often greatly unsettling values and disturbing the financial and business interests of the country by their gambling operations.

It is a fact that railroad men who reach high places, and control railroad management, invariably grow rich, while nine-tenths of all persons engaged in ordinary business ultimately fail.*

It is a fact that the tillable portion of our public domain is about exhausted, having been largely granted to railroads, and that successive Congresses have refused to declare forfeited several large grants in cases where the companies had not complied with the conditions.

What is the remedy for all these evils? No remedy will stamp them out entirely. Diseases must exist on the body politic as well as on the natural body. Sometimes they kill the patient. But something should be done nevertheless, in attempting a cure. The following suggest themselves as the most practical measures:

1. Provide by law for a careful government supervision of all transportation by common carriers, and for government control of inter-state commerce.

2. Make stringent laws for the protection of the purity of the ballot box, and enforce severe penalties for their violation.

3. In the case of the rising generation and future immigrants, deprive the illiterate of the right of franchise.

4. Reform the jury system, so that juries will not so frequently consist of blockheads and knaves. Then there

*Note 20,—Where do they get it.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PITTSBURGH RIOTS.—FIRE AND DESOLATION.—A RACE FOR LIFE.

The surprise of Norwell at thus meeting his old friend in this wilderness was by no means agreeable. He had often thought of Chetta since her unaccountable departure from New York, and looked on her flight as another of her freaks. He had misunderstood her in the same way that her father had. Her absence had relieved him from his very embarrassing situation which had daily grown worse, so long as both Chetta and May Bryce remained in New York. As the latter had been absent too, for some months, Tom experienced a sense of relief. It was much easier to make love by mail. The matter could then be postponed when inconvenient. Meantime, May's letters came regularly and she scolded him tenderly if his answers were delayed too long.

The men greeted Miss Ingledee cordially, and, as it was just noon, she dismissed her school, so they could talk freely. At first she appeared embarrassed, but this feeling wore away as she listened with anxious interest to Tom's account of her father, and his changed appearance. She wished to learn more, so she invited them to dinner at the humble farmhouse where she boarded. Here they had their horses put up and fed, and after dinner they indulged in a lengthy conversation. Norwell advised her to return home. She had intimated to him, partly, the cause of the falling out between herself and her father. He urged her that her place was with her father now in his loneliness, and ventured the opinion that she would be welcomed home if she chose to go. For herself, she had changed none of her views concerning the Ingledee wealth, but a sense of duty to her father outweighed her personal feelings. Wilson had gone out to the stable with the boy to get the horses. Tom and Chetta had these few minutes' conversation alone. He felt it to be his duty to urge her return, regardless of his own past relations to her. "Miss

Ingledee," he said, "your place is at home. We all miss you there very much."

"Does any one really miss me?"

"Your father is very lonely."

Perhaps she expected a different answer, but this was quite sufficient, for it showed her her duty.

"Are you quite sure, Mr. Norwell, that father really wishes me to go back?"

"Yes, he has intimated as much to me. But, of course, you understand that he is a proud man, and would probably not make any direct advances toward a reconciliation."

"Yes, I know that, Mr. Norwell. I will go."

"It is the best thing you can do. You must be very lonely in this out of the way place."

"Oh, Mr. Norwell, I have been so lonesome. There is no one here who makes any pretensions to culture. I found it rather novel at first, listening to the droll dialect and homely talk of these people, but that soon wore off, and then I was very lonely. I felt as if life had nothing more for me, and the future was all a blank. I could not write to hear from old friends, and for a while I was actually sick. I shall never make light of homesickness again."

"I am very sorry that you have suffered," said Norwell. His natural kindness of heart was touched, and there was in his consciousness a sort of feeling that, perhaps, he was not entirely guiltless in this matter.

"That is all over now," she said with a little laugh; "I had a hard fight, though. If it hadn't been for books, I should have gone wild. The people here have an old encyclopedia, left by some relative, and the only one for miles around; well, I think I must have read nearly everything in those sixteen big volumes, commencing with Aard-vark and ending with Zebra. And they are very interesting too."

"Doubtless they think you a great scholar here."

"They do. They pay me twenty-five dollars per month. That is five dollars more than they ever paid a lady teacher in the summer. But you don't know how glad I was to see you and Mr. Wilson. Meeting old acquaintances from New York seems almost too good to be real."

"Then I may tell your father all, and say you will return? When, say?"

"My school closes here in three weeks. I could not think of giving that up, and disappointing these people."

The horses were led up to the gate, and Wilson offered his hand to say good-bye. Then Norwell took the hand he had so often clasped. Her heart was beating tumultuously, in spite of her efforts to appear perfectly calm. She took his hand and retained it for a second, then turned quickly to conceal her feelings, and with a hasty good-bye, ran into the house.

When Norwell and Wilson returned to the little village of rough board shanties that evening, they learned that the great strike of railroad men had at last begun. Telegrams were passing on the wires incessantly, reporting its progress at various points. Next day they continued, announcing that the strike was rapidly extending all over the country. At many points there were serious indications of riot. The militia had been ordered out, and United States regulars were embarking for the scenes of disturbance. Some of the railroads had suspended all freight trains, and, in some cases, passenger trains were not allowed to go through.

Norwell and Wilson started for Pittsburgh on the second day of the strike. Arriving there without interruption they found the excitement intense. Dispatches poured in from all parts of the Eastern, Central, and Western States announcing the progress of this, perhaps, the greatest strike in history. Fifty thousand railroad men had struck. The criminal classes, burglars, thieves, pickpockets, and vagrants, were taking advantage of the prevailing disorder, and pursued more boldly their dangerous trades. They only waited for an outbreak till they could pillage openly. Riots had already taken place in several cities, though, fortunately, with very little bloodshed. The Governor of Pennsylvania was absent on the Pacific Coast. Telegrams had been sent urging him to return instantly, and he was now on the way, flying eastward by special train at the rate of forty miles an hour.

General Hancock had ordered a detachment of United States troops to proceed westward from Philadelphia. A regiment of Brooklyn militia was slowly working its way westward on the Erie railroad from New York City. A regiment of Philadelphia militia reached Pittsburgh to aid the local force. Against these strangers there was an intensely bitter feeling. In a street affray the soldiers had fired into the crowd, among which there were thousands of respectable citizens. The excitement grew until a majority of the people were intensely incensed against the great corporations. The

Octopus Oil Company was denounced in the most severe terms, and talk was freely indulged of burning its vast property scattered all over Western Pennsylvania.

The city of Pittsburgh was in a dreadful situation. She was exposed to the vengeance of an excited mob, consisting of thousands of determined men, some with grievous wrongs to redress, others secretly rejoicing at this sudden and unexpected prospect of pillage. The community momentarily feared a horrible outbreak. All the materials for a tremendous explosion were at hand; the train was carefully laid; it needed only a spark to ignite it, and that spark soon fell in the fatal spot. The feeling against the militia grew hourly. A detachment of them was fortified in the roundhouse. It was suggested to burn them out. No sooner was the word dropped than thousands of throats took it up. "Roast the butchers," was heard on every side; but it was no boys' play to approach within close range of those rifles.

The crowd was eager for the work of destruction, and the great depot was fired by the frenzied mob. The fire spread rapidly. The lurid flames shot high in air, while dense masses of smoke from burning coal and oil cars settled over the "Smoky City," giving its already soot-darkened atmosphere an almost funereal blackness. The fire licked up the long rows of freight cars on the side tracks with its great, red, hissing tongue, like a living, hungry thing. It spread to the sheds and freight houses, which curled, crackled, grew white hot, and disappeared like card board before the fiery blast. It gnawed into the very earth, and ate out the buried oaken ties. The heavy steel rails of the track twisted and writhed under their fiery baptism, and curled into fantastic shapes, like wriggling serpents. The lurid flames, the blinding, suffocating smoke, the blistering heat, the crash of falling buildings, and the derisive shouts of the maddened mob, all formed a scene that was truly infernal. The crackling flames and intense heat drove the people to a respectful distance.

Thieves were busy pillaging cars that had been broken open. Costly goods of every description were carried off by the armful, by these wreckers. Heavy articles were left to be consumed by the rapidly advancing flames. The fire department was helpless. Men caught the bits of the horses while the mob cut the traces and left the engines standing useless. The frightened horses reared and plunged, firemen swore, women screamed, and the mob yelled in triumph.

The police were useless; to interfere only involved the danger of sacrificing life in vain. And still the volcano of flame rolled steadily heavenward with a leaping and crackling and hissing that was most appalling. A city on fire is a sight more awful than any convulsion of nature, unless it be a great earthquake.

The unfortunate militia cooped up in the roundhouse had already suffered greatly under the burning July heat. Now they were in danger of being suffocated like a wild beast at bay in his den. Though at a distance of several hundred feet from the burning depot the heat could be plainly felt through the glass of the windows. The smoke was suffocating. Threats of burning them out were freely made. Several flaming cars of oil and combustibles saturated with petroleum, were shoved down the tracks toward the doomed building. But fortunately the fire did not spread in that direction, and the roundhouse was safe, for nobody cared to venture under the grim muzzles of several hundred rifles. A cannon loaded with spikes and bolts was now trained on the building with the intention of battering it down. But the besieged were so vigilant that the piece was not fired a single time, though half a score of dead bodies strewn around it next morning testified to the bravery of the mob and the horrors of that night-attack. Prudent people wisely remained indoors as far as possible. A portion of the mob, consisting of those who had nothing to lose and envied all who possessed property, were growing insolent. A carriage was greeted with hoots of derision. A broadcloth coat and silk hat were pretty sure to receive insult. Several individuals who were indiscreet enough to wear these very palpable evidences of aristocracy (in the eyes of the mob) narrowly escaped violence.

Thousands of people were at the corners of streets and wherever a good view of the great conflagration could be obtained. In these crowds there was the usual amount of talking, bantering and discussion incident to an excited gathering of all kinds of people. The mob now consisted of many in no way identified with the railroads or the strikers. Some sympathized with it, others denounced it; some of this street discussion was good-humored, some of it loud and angry.

Norwell and Wilson stood in one of these groups at a distance of several blocks from the center of the mob. Sud-

denly an uproar was heard. There was loud shouting and a movement in the crowd. Then an open carriage dashed rapidly up the street. There were loud shouts, "Hang him," "Down with the old robber," "Swing him up," "Stop the carriage," and so forth. The frightened driver lashed his terrified horses to full speed up the incline over the hard, cobblestone pavement. As the carriage passed Norwell he recognized its occupant, who sat bolt upright and looked defiance at the people in this hour of danger. It was John Ophir, the great railway king. Ophir had been out on a trip inspecting some of his railroad property and had been delayed by the strike in Pittsburgh. With his usual daring and disregard for public sentiment he had determined to see what the mob looked like. But unfortunately for him the illustrated papers had made his face well known to the people all over the country. Some recognized him. Instantly the cry was raised: "Ophir, Ophir, hang him! lynch him!"

As the carriage came directly opposite the spot where Norwell and Wilson stood, two or three strong men sprang into the street, seized the bits of the horses, and at great risk succeeded in stopping the animals. The driver meanwhile plied his whip furiously and accompanied the blows with savage oaths. The horses plunged and tried to escape from the men, the mob shouted and all was confusion. While the attention of the people was directed to the struggling men and horses, Ophir jumped from his seat to the ground, darted through the door to a narrow passage between two buildings and disappeared. Norwell and Wilson sprang into the passage, shutting the door and bolting it behind them. Some on seeing this latter move cried out, "There they go," "Stop the villains."

Ophir, reaching the alley in the rear turned, seeing that he was closely pursued, and recognized Norwell.

"My God, Norwell, is it you! Have mercy. Would you see me torn up by that savage mob? Spare me and I will make you a rich man."

"Silence!" said Norwell, "this is no time to talk by-gones. We will try to save you. Here! Change hats." Quick as thought Norwell seized Ophir's glossy silk hat and placed his own soft crush hat on the other man's head, jamming it down over his eyes. "Now, run for life! Out at the far end of the alley! Quick!"

Ophir needed no second bidding. Though unused to vio-

lent exercise, he made exceedingly good time through the alley. Norwell gave Ophir's silk hat a fling over a wall out of sight. "Now, Wilson, run for it."

"But they will hang you sure if they catch you."

"Better one than two. Think of your wife. Go! I'll get out some way. Through by that store there is a way of escape." He shoved Wilson toward the door, which was but a rod away.

Wilson darted through the board fence into the rear yard of the house and quietly appeared on the other street in a few moments, by a passage similar to the one by which they had entered the alley. Meanwhile the mob having no means at hand of breaking down the door by which Ophir had escaped, poured through a narrow cross alley and appeared in the alley where Norwell was, in a direction opposite to that by which Ophir had escaped. Norwell, bareheaded, walked leisurely back, meeting the pursuing crowd. "Here he is," rose in an angry shout. "Bring a rope." The leaders of the mob closed around Norwell to seize him. He quietly backed against the fence and said:

"Don't be in a hurry. I'm here when you want me."

"We want you right off, I guess," said a big man, "and now we've got you. Where's the rope?"

"It's coming," exclaimed a second.

"Hadn't you better get the right man before you hang him?"

"Captain, I guess *you* are the right man. That's what they said on the street, any way. You are one of them cursed millionaires that's bleedin' the life out o' the poor people with your railroads and oil companies and other devilish schemes of robbery. We've got you an' we mean to keep you."

"I am not the man who was in the carriage."

"Captain," said the spokesman of the mob, "you'd better spend your time prayin', fur I reckon this is about your last chance."

A rope had been obtained somewhere and it was proposed to lead the prisoner into the street and hang him to a tree. The alley was now full of men shouting, struggling, and all trying to get to the front to see what was going on. Norwell remained cool though he realized the extreme peril of his situation in the hands of a frenzied mob, who could not be expected to listen to reason. Resistance was worse than useless. He must try to get them to listen to him.

"I tell you I am not the man you are looking for. Gentlemen, for God's sake, listen to me. You won't hang a man without giving him a chance for his life, will you? I am not the man who was in the carriage.

"Oh, you're not, ain't you," exclaimed several voices, derisively.

"No, I am not. I can convince you if you will only listen."

"Give him a chance." "Let him say what he's got to say," rose from the crowd. The American people are pre-eminently a people who love fair play. In this mob were some who, above the passion and excitement of the moment, were determined to see fair play, and let the prisoner tell his story.

"I saw that man jump from the carriage and I followed him through here," said Norwell. "But I guess he must have got through the alley."

"You guess so," sneered the big man who acted as ring-leader of the mob. "We want facts now. If you are not the man, where is he?"

"I don't know where he is. But I stood on the corner there for half an hour before the carriage came up. Did nobody here see me?"

"That's pretty d—d thin," exclaimed one ruffian. "Hurry up boys. Let's string him up," cried another. Two men seized Norwell rudely to lead him away. His case was apparently hopeless, for without additional evidence he could make no impression on that excited mob, who, like blood-hounds, panted for their prey. Two men, who, mounted on a box got a good view of Norwell, now called out that they had seen him standing there with a friend before the carriage came up. That was certainly corroborative evidence, and the mob fell back a little. Norwell now continued:

"I can tell you just who the man was you wanted. It was John Ophir." The crowd jeered at the mention of Ophir's name. Some of the later arrivals who had heard the first hue and cry, confirmed this statement, for they were present when the people had first recognized Ophir down the street. This man clearly was not Ophir, and there was nothing to do but release him. "Mighty ticklish business for you," said one. "Close shave," said another. The big man said, "No offence, I hope, Captain?"

"All right, boys," said Norwell, "but I advise you to

will be at least grounds for hope that all offenders against the law may be punished, regardless of wealth or social standing.

5. Public opinion must make bribe-taking as odious and dangerous as horse-stealing once was. Then corruption in official life will diminish.

6. All intelligent citizens must take an active part in politics, and see that honest, intelligent legislators and incorruptible judges are chosen to manage the machinery of State. *That machinery will not run itself.*

Leaving the coal regions sick at heart with the misery prevailing there, Norwell and Wilson proceeded to the oil regions. A new belt had just been opened, and people were rushing to the territory, hoping to obtain in some way, they scarcely knew how, a portion of this oleaginous wealth. A clearing had been begun in the dense forest, and board shanties were springing up along the streets in which stumps stood thickly. The whole scene reminded them somewhat of the rapid growth of a mining town in the Rocky Mountains. But the picturesque figure of the "rustler" in greasy brown duck, with his pockets full of specimens and his mind full of millions, was absent, and the scene partook more of the activity pertaining to a commercial center.

Norwell and Wilson soon found there was no opportunity for making favorable investments here. The great Octopus Oil Company had reached out its slimy arms and enfolded the entire district. It had bought or leased nearly all the available lands. It owned the pipe lines and, in fact, had the entire oil business of the country in its remorseless clutch. Several ruined operators told very discouraging stories. One man had invested one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in a refinery at Pittsburgh. The railroads charged him one dollar per barrel for transporting his oil. They charged the Octopus the same, but rebated to them half a dollar per barrel. Unable to compete with the Octopus under such extortionate discrimination,—the result, beyond doubt, of conspiracy between the trunk lines and the oil company,—he was obliged to close his refinery and sell out to this hydra-headed, devouring monster, which was one of the most daring and unscrupulous, that ever disgraced this or any other country. This was no isolated case. All the rivals of the Octopus were treated in the same way. Over one hundred refiners were obliged to quit business in Pittsburgh and vicinity alone.

This great corporation, literally bursting with its spoils, even openly defied the State of Pennsylvania, and refused to pay certain taxes.*

One of the victims, struggling under the unequal odds granted to the Octopus in the matter of shipments, applied to the offices of one of the trunk lines for special terms to large shippers. He received no satisfaction. Then he inquired if he could get the same rates as the Octopus, provided his shipments were as large as theirs. The reply was, that the company did not care to carry oil for him at any price. The railroads refused cars, and the Octopus controlled the pipe lines. As a result, the well owner might let his oil run on the ground, or take the prices fixed by this monopoly. And yet intelligent men will deliberately pooh at the prevalent dissatisfaction with monopolies, and say it is all "granger talk," or the work of a crank. There is a Latin saying which runs thus: "What can happen to some one, may happen to any one." These things have happened, they may happen again, unless popular vigilance prevents them. Let us not suppose that the liberty won by our forefathers one hundred years ago, and preserved at great cost twenty years ago, will endure for any time without care. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and each generation has its duties to perform, its dangers to ward off. Shall we tamely bear this grievous Iron Crown of heavy rails and goading spikes, which a few unprincipled men are placing on our heads in mockery? Shall we be deceived by the essence of royalty because it lacks the name?

Prospecting was going on in another district a few miles distant. Norwell and Wilson determined to ride there on horseback, and look at the prospects. The country was very rough and thinly settled, the manners of the people most primitive. After riding leisurely along for several miles they came to a fork in the road, and were in some doubt as to which way led to their destination. A log schoolhouse, the relic of a past generation, stood near the road. Norwell rode up to the open door to inquire of the schoolmistress the way to their destination. That young lady came to the door in response to the call, and started back in sudden surprise. It was Chetta Ingledee.

Note 21.—The rebate swindle.

Miss De Furrier had concluded to give a masquerade party. A masked ball is a little out of the ordinary course of events. To the thousands who have never participated in such an affair, it is a decided novelty. But, really, there should be no novelty about it. Life is for many a continual masquerade. Nature has given to most of us two faces, one for the world to look at, one that we dare not look upon ourselves. It is a truism to repeat that the sinner often wears the mask of a saint while doing the devil's work. In fact, there is unquestionably an erroneous idea prevalent concerning the make-up of the latter personage. Instead of being got up chiefly in horns, hoofs, tail and a very forbidding countenance, his majesty, beyond doubt, knows the latest style and dresses in it. His raiment is of the best, his politeness perfection, his smile most affable. He moves in good society, frequents the fashionable resorts, keeps right up with the times, and is, in short, a devil of a good fellow. It was a most facetious wag who clothed the devil in horns and an odor of brimstone.

The false friend wears the mask of sodality, lifting it betimes to wag the tongue of slander. The traitor often wears the mask of friendship closest after he has sold you, and has the money in his pocket. The ingrate wears the mask of injured innocence while repaying benefactions with neglect. The coward, too, flaunts the lion skin and swings the club of Hercules, a most comical antic, when the presence of real danger would cause his frightened little soul to cower trembling in its darkest corner.

With this perpetual masquerade of real life going on around us, there would seem to be little occasion for any artificial bal masque, even as a diversion. It would afford as much entertainment to a thoughtful person, and far more profit, to enter any large assemblage, and study the every-day masks of the people there. Here is a gay gallant making himself agreeable to a finely-dressed, beautiful woman. What is his second face behind the first? What does she conceal beneath so fair an exterior? Here is a man who makes conspicuous the fact that he is a very honest man. Perhaps he paints on his mask the sign, "Square dealing." What lurks behind that specious outside? Here is a serpent in the guise of a man pouring honeyed words into the ear of a foolish, unsuspecting girl. There, under the very fashionable mask of respectability, promenade Misery, Want and Death in the person of a millionaire brewer or distiller, who

has built a towering pyramid of wealth on the poisoned bodies, ruined souls and blighted homes of his fellow-men. Be very courteous to him. He is *respectable*. Shun his victim, the reeling, besotted drunkard; he is not respectable.

Miss De Furrier had not invited "everybody," for she disliked a crush, and this was a party for enjoyment. Many of our old acquaintances were present, among them Miss Ingledee, the Wilsons, young Mr. Brownell, who, strange to say, was not abroad, Mr. Frederick Snicker and Miss Snicker, Miss Bryce, Mr. Roker, Mr. Hickley and others. Obedient to her mother's advice, May was not going a great deal into society, but she wished very much to see a masquerade, and so accepted this invitation.

It was indeed a brilliant sight to behold the gay maskers in costumes that represented the people of nearly every age and nation. There were kings, queens, knights, warriors, pages, savages, shepherds, historical characters, mythological personages, and a host of miscellaneous damsels and young men in every imaginable conceit of mask and costume.

Arthur Wilson personated an officer of the Continental army, Mrs. Wilson a lady of the same period. Miss Snicker tripped lightly as a fairy. Fred Snicker was a knight in armor, and looked very formidable in coat of mail, helmet and greaves. His legs perhaps did not fill the latter as well as might have been desired, but his manly breast heaved under the influence of stays and plate armor in a most heroic fashion, that looked almost "abwupt." Tom Norwell attracted a great deal of attention as a "rustler," clad in brown soiled duck, with belt, knife and pistols of formidable proportions, rocks in his pocket, and a pick on his shoulder. Miss Bryce was a flower girl, Mr. Roker a haughty Spanish cavalier of the sixteenth century. Miss Ingledee attracted general attention in a classical flowing costume with sandals, bow and quiver, and a laurel wreath on her head. At her side during the grand march around the saloons was a beautiful greyhound,—a decided innovation on such occasions. Many were the guesses as to whom this huntress personated. Most of them were in favor of Diana, but the big greyhound set the guessing all at random. She evidently was not a conventional Diana. The greyhound symbolized swiftness, the laurel victory. She was Atalanta Victrix, the swift-footed maiden of old.

A few days before Mr. Roker had banteringly suggested

to her that they go as a classical couple, mentioning Pyramus and Thisbe and Pygmalion and Galatea. Miss Ingledee did not choose to adopt the suggestion at the time. Still she had selected a classical subject. Mr. Roker might now, if he chose, play the role of Meilanion, if he dared to pit his craft against her elusive agility, on the usual conditions that he should lose his head in case he failed.

At least three persons in the room recognized Atalanta Victorious. The haughty Spanish Cavalier knew her, the broad-shouldered Rustler could never mistake that figure; the heart of the modest Flower Girl sank as she saw before her the form of the rival whom she feared. That rival appeared before her in the garb of a conqueror, and took her place in the grand march as proudly as the Roman general rode amid the splendors of a triumph at the head of his hardy legions preceded by the spoils and the unhappy vanquished. May shuddered as she thought that perhaps the simple character assumed by herself compared with the bold one of Atalanta, might typify her own situation in comparison with that of Chetta Ingledee. She tried to laugh off the disagreeable thought, which was very foolish, but it persisted in returning unbidden, like an importunate but disagreeable suitor. When she saw the Rustler offer his arm to Atalanta, and take his place on one side, while the beautiful greyhound walked at the other, then her heart sank, and her unpleasant thought became a presentiment. There was no more pleasure for her that evening. In silence she took the proffered arm of a jolly monk of the Middle Ages, and joined the gay procession which, in spite of herself, she imagined as a funeral procession marching slowly toward her own grave. At this gruesome thought she shuddered so violently as to surprise the jolly monk, who inquired if she were ill.

The evening seemed interminable to May, and she felt a great relief when the festivities drew to a close. Horace Roker was still disposed to play the cavalier, and after the unmasking was very attentive to Miss Ingledee. Norwell noticed that his Prairie Flower was unusually taciturn on the way home. In reply to his question how she had enjoyed herself the answer was simply that she thought most of the parts very well performed. She had not a word as to her own enjoyment, and he thinking her tired, relapsed into silence also.

May retired that night very nervous and dejected. She

lay thinking for an hour or more. Sleep was impossible. She rose, lighted the gas, and read over for the third time a long letter from her mother. As she perused that description of the tropical beauties of Southern California, with its luscious fruits and winter flowers, she longed to be there with her dear parents, far away from the anxieties, worry, and artificial glitter of this great city. A sense of utter loneliness came over her, and burying her face deep in the pillow, she wept like a child.

By degrees her troubled thoughts grew calmer, and she felt as if she could sleep. But try as she might, slumber would not come. Her busy brain ceaselessly wove all sorts of incongruous images, which blended themselves in unending variations. She tried to devise some plan by which she could surely keep her lover all to herself, but each scheme for a moment seemed practicable, and the next moment very absurd. Again and again the grand march passed before her eyes, close them as she would, and she shuddered as a fleeting fancy suggested a hearse at the head of the procession. She grew vexed with herself and tried to reason herself into a calmer state. This pandemonium was the height of absurdity. By an effort of the will she would bid it cease. But it would not cease at her command. It was very foolish to attach any importance to Norwell's selecting Atalanta as a partner in the march. It was the right of any gentleman to select any lady before unmasking. But why had her lover's eyes been keen enough to recognize Atalanta among all these people in such a variety of costumes? Why had he not preferred the Flower Girl? Her heart grew sick as she thought of the possible answer.

After weary hours May fell into that restless mental condition that is neither sleeping nor waking. She was conscious that she was not asleep, for her brain still wearily wove fleeting shreds of indistinct ideas into absurd combinations, and yet she was not awake, for she was no longer fully conscious that she ought to go to sleep. After an indefinite period of this wearying mental condition she woke with a start, and sat bolt upright in bed. "What do you want?" she asked in alarm. There was no answer, and she saw by degrees in the indistinct light that no one was in the room. She had clearly seen standing by her bedside Atalanta Victorious in an attitude of scornful triumph.

In her first alarm she thought of calling Alice, but on

reflection concluded it was best not to do so. She would have to explain the cause of her fright, and her pride revolted at the idea of divulging her dire presentiments that reflected on the loyalty of a lover, and would only pain his true-hearted sister. She opened wide the window and let the cool night air stream in. Then she grew calmer by degrees, and finally felt a sense of cold. Again she sought her pillow and was soon in a deep, heavy sleep that was almost a stupor.

Mrs. Wilson and May breakfasted late next morning. Arthur had already gone down town to the office, he and Norwell having lately engaged in the business of stock brokers and money lenders. Mrs. Wilson had lately expressed fears to her husband concerning the condition of May's health. She felt that the girl was unhappy, and hinted that perhaps her love affairs were not in a satisfactory condition. She blamed her brother in spite of her natural tendency to shield him in all things. Wilson thought it best for her to say nothing to Tom, and leave all to the parties interested. So it was agreed that nothing should be said for the present. But when May came down to breakfast looking tired and pale, with no appetite for the most tempting viands, Mrs. Wilson determined to speak.

"May, I fear you did not rest well last night."

"No, I think I was too tired to sleep."

"You are not well."

"It is nothing serious, Mrs. Wilson, but I must not overtax myself again with these late parties. They tire me very much."

"May, you are not happy. Has Tom been neglectful? I will speak to him if you wish."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed May. "You must not do that. Tom is very kind. I do not expect him to give up society entirely for me."

"I know you are not well," persisted Alice. "Had you not better consult Dr. Barnet?"

"Really, Alice, you are very kind, but I assure you I am not so ill as that."

She really believed that nothing ailed her beyond the absurd fancies of the night, which the daylight would dispel. That day she wrote a long letter to her parents, telling them a great deal about the masked ball and but very little about herself. No news is bad news, for people cannot conceal happiness, let them try never so hard.

Mr. Horace Roker went home from the party feeling more than usually well satisfied with himself. His wooing was progressing satisfactorily, he thought. He was a regular caller at the Ingledee residence. Since the death of Silas, Mr. Ingledee had appeared to confide in him more fully than before. He anticipated no trouble in that direction. He had kept up his acquaintance with May Bryce and felt sure that she and Norwell were engaged. After reflection, Roker concluded that his affairs would never be in a more promising condition. He determined to learn his fate.

With this object in view he called on Miss Ingledee a few evenings after Miss De Furrier's ball. They had the usual talk about society events, the theaters, and current topics. Roker sang well, and as Miss Ingledee was very fond of music she often played accompaniments to his voice. Music was about the only thing in which these two had congeniality of tastes. They had sung more than usual and talked a great deal on a variety of topics. It was growing late, and still Roker lingered. At last he plainly asked her to be his wife. She did not blush and appear confused or surprised. Her answer was brief, frank and unequivocal. She did not love him and could never marry him.

He had hardly expected a positive *yes* at once, and was not willing to accept no. Assuming his most agreeable manner, he was prepared to urge his claims.

"Love," he said, "is perhaps slightly conventional in its nature. That will all come in due time. I can give you the highest guarantees of my standing, but, of course, they would be superfluous. I am highly respectable, I move in the best society, I flatter myself that I have some degree of culture, I have excellent health and perhaps a reasonable degree of beauty, though, of course, that counts for nothing in a man," he added deprecatingly.

"Mr. Roker, it is unnecessary to recapitulate these things. I understand them all."

"Are such things not to be considered in matrimony as well as in other important contracts?"

"I suppose so. But a man may be all these and yet lack the qualities which a woman loves best. He may be respectable, cultured, and faultless in manners, and yet"—she hesitated. Though she had never encouraged this man to place himself in the embarrassing situation where he now was, she pitied him and would be easy with him if he would only

let her. But he waited for her to go on, and embarrassing as it was, she was obliged to do so. "A man may be all these, and yet a woman wants real love in return for love."

He took up the thought which she had not fully expressed. "I understand you. Perhaps you may think me *heartless*. That would be very proper, seeing that you have my heart." She did not smile at this feeble little pun, but waited for him to continue.

"I assure you, Miss Ingledee, that I am by no means heartless or indifferent as you think me. I have my feelings the same as other men; I can appreciate worth in a woman as well as anybody, better than many." She could scarcely deny this seeing that she was his choice. "I think love is a fiction, a popular humbug. It is similarity of taste that should be considered."

"Mr. Roker, I think our conversation is assuming the form of argument. Love needs no argument."

"Do you doubt my sincerity?"

"Doubtless your offer is sincere, but you admit there is no love in it. I have none for you. Let the matter rest there, since we never can be anything to each other."

"Miss Ingledee, we have been friends for a long time. You have listened to me patiently. May I ask you yet another question, hoping you will excuse an inquiry which is of such moment to me?"

"Go on, Mr. Roker."

"Is your heart elsewhere?"

"You have no right to ask that question, Mr. Roker."

"Miss Ingledee, you have allowed things to go so far—please do not misunderstand me, I do not say *encouraged* but *allowed*—since this is the case, I believe I have a right to ask any question that so vitally concerns myself."

"For the same reason I shall decline to answer."

"Very well," he said deliberately, "I shall then conclude that there is no other, and continue to hope that you may change your mind. I have only this to say in conclusion, that for years I have wished to make you my wife. My course has been consistent, and my wish sincere. There has been no simulation. What would you think of the man who pretended love and did not feel it,—and who would leave the woman he thus deceived to pour a similar tale into the ear of another woman?" This speech touched her. She trembled slightly as she caught its covert meaning.

"He would be very base. Yes I think—I've no doubt—I know that you have been sincere, Mr. Roker, and I thank you, but let us mention this subject no more."

"At present."

"Never."

He took his adieu. The shaft so cunningly sped had entered her heart. She had no longer any doubt that Tom Norwell was guilty of double dealing, and she was the last one in the world to see it. Worst of all, she still loved him dearly.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE DANGER SIGNAL.

The firm of Norwell & Wilson, bankers and brokers, had been doing a heavy business. Norwell gave full rein to his feverish desire to get rich in a short time. His last venture in Chicago having been a very lucky one, he fully believed that in a few years he should again be rich. Wilson was more cautious, naturally, but less experienced in the methods of transacting business in New York. He was guided largely by Norwell's advice, though at times he had serious misgivings as to the outcome of some of their great undertakings.

Wilson's million dollars in cash had mostly disappeared in loans and various other channels. Instead of cash the vaults of the firm were literally crammed with railroad and other securities. Among the rest was a large block of "People's Union Telegraph" stock, which Wilson had bought when the great philanthropist Ophir had first organized this public benefaction in the interest of the people, as a rival to the "National Union." The liabilities of the firm were large, but their assets indicated that the business was on a sound basis. But Wall street, like the sea, is never in absolute repose. Now there were symptoms that another of its periodical disturbances was at hand.

As a man who was in confidential relations with one of the greatest of the money kings, Mr. Roker knew a thing or two of which he availed himself to make a few investments

find out whether a man has committed any crime or not before you hang him." Then Norwell walked into the street with that feeling of intense relief known only to those who for a brief space have stood face to face with the conqueror of all conquerors, the invincible foe, DEATH.

Next day the riot was suppressed, but the destruction of property had extended over a territory three miles in length. The militia imprisoned in the roundhouse were released after a perilous experience, and by a forced march on that fatal Sunday, escaped to the country, with a loss of several killed and wounded. The destruction of property amounted to several millions. One hundred and twenty-five costly locomotives lay useless in this wild wreck. Only blackened, smoking ruins marked the scene which had lately been the busy center of travel and commerce. Vast quantities of property had been stolen by the thieves. The disreputable classes had disgraced the cause of the honest strikers, who began the movement for the redress of their wrongs. One rich booty escaped them through their ignorance of its value. In one spot the railroad track was covered by a vast sheet of whitish metal that looked like lead. When the burning cars had burst under the weight of metal molten by the intense heat, a silvery fountain had poured across the track and run down the gutters, mingling with the ashes and parched dust of the street. Thousands of feet had crossed and recrossed this shining mass which soon became a dirty color scarcely distinguishable from the soil. Norwell and Wilson happening along stopped to look at this metal coating that covered the ground. Wilson stooped and picked up a spray of the mass that had run into a little channel. He looked at it eagerly for a moment, then called Tom's attention to it in a low tone.

"Do you see that?" he asked, pointing to a bright scratch he had made with his knife.

"Yes, lead."

"Lead!" Then lowering his tone so as to make sure that no one could hear him, "That is silver bullion, every ounce of it."

"What!" exclaimed Tom in astonishment.

"Sh! I've taken many a bar of it out of the old Amazon. There's at least half a million here in the street."

And so it proved to be. A car containing silver bullion had been burned, and the mob tramped over the precious mass thinking it lead.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MR. MALLEY COMES OUT IN STYLE.—A MASKED BALL. ATALANTA VICTORIOUS.

The Wilsons purchased an elegant home in a fashionable part of the city, though their house was comparatively modest compared with the residences of some of their wealthy Fifth Avenue neighbors. They had bought and furnished a place, keeping in mind the real comforts that may be derived from judicious use of wealth, rather than any factitious appurtenances that appeal only to the eye. There was nothing lavish, nothing bizarre. True, it was the home of a millionaire, but every detail of the interior indicated that it had not been the owner's design to advertise the fact that he was a rich man.

As soon as they were comfortably settled in their new home invitations were issued for a reception. Mrs. Wilson was careful to invite all those with whom she really cared to continue acquaintance, and beyond this number invited, as is nearly always the case, a few persons in payment of outstanding social obligations. Among these latter were the Snickers. Miss Harrie had readily accepted the invitation. Since the giver was a millionaire no other questions need be asked. It was settled around the Snicker family altar (as to which altar see a previous chapter) that it was altogether the proper thing to know the Wilsons. The Miss Norwell, whom it was not proper to know because she could not give parties, was now the Mrs. Wilson whom it was eminently proper to know, because she could give parties.

In the midst of her rich and fashionable company, Mrs. Wilson did not forget the humble people whom she had known when she was poor herself. She specially favored them by allowing them to come when they pleased, without the inconvenience of a full dress exhibit. She sent "at home" cards, among others, to Mary Hackett and Aunt Rhoda, and to Mr. Pipe Malley. The latter gentleman was slowly

rising in the world, with increasing prosperity. He wore better clothes, and persistently attempted to improve his speech and manners. Though he was not an extraordinary young man yet, only those who have been what Pipe Malley the newsboy was, and have afterward risen in life, can realize what the true self-made man has to encounter in his struggle with the world. To rise unaided from poverty and ignorance to eminence, requires abilities little short of genius.

Mary Hackett came and brought Aunt Rhoda with her. The old lady who had never been in a fine house in her life, took a childish delight in examining the furniture and talking about it. She gave a start as she sat down on a great, velvet-cushioned, easy chair and found herself sinking into it too far, she thought. She leaned back, and her surprise ended in a cracked little squeaky scream, as she thought herself going clear over backward. She chose a plainer, steadier chair rather than trust herself to that "plaguey tiltin' thing." The old lady gazed with admiration approaching awe on a rich velvet-covered sofa with delicate designs in light colors, and beautifully carved woodwork. She could not be persuaded to sit on it at all.

"It's too fine, Mrs. Wilson, for my old clothes to tech. It must o' cost a sight o' money."

"Two hundred dollars," answered Alice. "We had to have a few nice things, Aunt Rhoda, to show company."

"I want to know! Two hundred dollars! Land sakes! I've heard father (she pronounced the a in father very flat) tell how he started when he was married in Vermont seventy years ago. He had five dollars in money, that he laid out in dishes an' pots, an' mother hadn't a last thing but a bed an' a kiverled. My! but isn't that pretty!" she exclaimed as she gazed on the sofa, and gently felt the soft, yielding cushions which she was afraid to press very hard lest they should never recover their full outlines. "Isn't it pretty, Mary?"

"It is very beautiful, Auntie."

"Mary, I've saved something all these years for you. When you marry, I can't git sich fine things for you, but I won't have it said that my child hadn't a single thing to start housekeepin' with."

"Never mind that now, Auntie," whispered Mary. And so Aunt Rhoda spent an hour looking with childish wonder at the elegant things in this fine house, which was to her a new world.

When Mr. Pipe Malley called to pay his respects, he was dressed as he supposed, well up toward the top of the fashion. He wore a light-colored tailor-made suit (the first he had ever possessed constructed to order), new boots with very square toes and very lively squeak, nobby stiff hat in the latest style (the first of its species which had ever adorned his head), and a very glossy standing collar. He had carried a silver watch with a rolled plate chain for so long a time already, that he no longer considered those articles of utility and adornment as strong points in his make up.

Mrs. Wilson received Mr. Malley with cordiality, and introduced him to her husband. Pipe, who felt that he was now about to wrestle with some of the most intricate problems of etiquette, was on his mettle for the occasion. But many a doughty warrior who has trodden his enemies under the iron heel of war, has fallen before that skilled adversary greater than himself, etiquette, who pierced his armor with a subtle shaft, while the boast of victory was in his mouth. It is not strange then that Pipe Malley fell at the very first volley. He committed the humiliating blunder of calling Wilson "Mr. Malley," as he took the host's hand, saying: "Happy to know you, Mr. Malley." He had rehearsed this scene over and over at home, picturing to himself the social triumph he was about to achieve, and this was the mortifying result. He blushed scarlet with mingled humiliation and anger at his own awkwardness.

But the host and hostess soon put him at his ease by their cordial manners. Pipe had taken the big easy chair. Unlike Aunt Rhoda, he had no misgivings on the score of its landing him heels over head backward. Under pretense of moving, he stealthily teetered in it to see how far he could sink into the velvety, yielding seat. The conversation was spirited, though for a time Mr. Malley got his verbs and subjects at hopeless variance, and flung adjectives and pronouns round in wild confusion. But his speech improved, as he grew more self-possessed. Alice asked him about his mother.

"Oh, she's first rate. Mother's pretty staunch for an old lady."

"You have a brother, I believe," said Wilson.

"Yes, we're twins." By dint of perseverance and after many signal failures Pipe had learned not to put himself in the plural as twins, and was trying to have Quill achieve the same accomplishment. Notwithstanding Pipe's persistent

efforts, Quill had not yet mastered this nice distinction of language, and occasionally delivered himself of the statement: "I'm twins," when the subject of relationship was brought up.

"How is your brother? He works with you, I believe?"

"Yes, Quill works for the firm. Oh, he's tip-top, thankee; nothin' ever ails Quill."

Mrs. Wilson asked Pipe about business.

"Well, it's tolerable, not exactly rushin'. Oh, business is all cut up, but we're doin' an' improvin' business, an' I call that something."

"That is a great deal, Mr. Malley."

"We've moved, Mrs. Wilson. We've got four rooms now instid o' two. I says to mother, 'Mother, I don't care a cent for style, but I do like solid comfort.'" Then glancing around the room, he continued: "You folks have got a pretty slick lay out here, I tell you what." Mr. Wilson smiled very perceptibly, till a look from his wife seemed to curtail in some degree the dimensions of his mirth. He replied:

"Oh, yes, we shall contrive to get along. Mrs. Wilson believes in solid comfort, too."

Soon after Mr. Malley took his departure, highly pleased at receiving an invitation to call again, and bring his brother. For the latter he apologized, saying that Quill didn't "go much on society." Pipe Malley went home, feeling exceedingly well pleased with himself and toward the world in general. The future was very bright for him. He was prosperous financially and socially. With a calling acquaintance on Miss Ingledee and the Wilsons, he should like to have any one dispute the fact that he moved in good society.

Miss Ingledee had also called on Mrs. Wilson, and the call had been duly returned. These exchanges of courtesies had been conducted with punctilious formality. They gave recognition to the fact that an acquaintance existed between the two ladies, and they indicated still further what both were not likely to forget, that no special friendship existed between them. The ladies were studiously polite, and each expressed a wish that the other might call again. And they were not hypocrites. Neither had a thought of deceiving the other, for it was evident they understood each other.

Again May Bryce is in New York. She stops most of the time with her very dear friend, Mrs. Wilson. The Prairie

Flower is no longer the happy girl that we first knew on whose fair face had never rested the shadow of a care. She has grown more womanly, more thoughtful. The rosy cheeks are a trifle thinner and paler. Her eye appears almost unnaturally bright, and the white has a pearly luster. Tom Norwell says she is prettier than ever, and she believes it because he says so. But a careful observer might not coincide in the lover's roseate statement. Mrs. Bryce might think differently, for what eye is like that of a mother who holds her child dearer than all other earthly things. Mrs. Wilson, whose heart goes out toward her best friend, can see in May's face the evidences of troubled thoughts, of something that approaches care and anxiety.

May's love has not brought the perfect happiness that most girls expect to find in this delightful phase of their experience. The views of romantic young ladies are too exalted, for nothing in this world is perfect, and even love falls short of perfection. The months have slowly crawled into years. Her lover is neither hot nor cold. He is very gallant, very kind, very procrastinating. She does not doubt him, because he has told her they will be married as soon as he makes a little more money, though that time seems now as far distant as ever. Meantime, the rose is fading from her cheeks and the welling spring of happiness that once overflowed in her heart is slowly subsiding. She can only wait and hope.

Mrs. Bryce has long felt secretly anxious about her daughter. She even wished to have the engagement broken off at once, but Mr. Bryce thinks her fears groundless. His faith in Norwell remains unshaken, and he predicts that everything will come out all right yet. They agree, however, that May is not strong, and that perhaps another visit in the East might do her good. Having particularly cautioned her sister and Mrs. Wilson that May must be well taken care of, Mrs. Bryce consented that she should again go to New York. Her father had leased the farm for a term of years, intending to travel and take a little enjoyment for awhile. The old folks had planned for themselves and May a trip to California to visit a brother of Mr. Bryce's, but to their surprise, May preferred to go East instead of to the Pacific coast.

"Well, Mary," said Mr. Bryce, "you see why the child prefers to go to New York. John's folks would all be strangers to her, so let her have her own way." Thus it was settled, and now three thousand miles separate the parents from their child.

parture. May Bryce had never been quite herself since that ominous night when she started from her bed, confronting the spectral Atalanta. Her cheeks were thinner, and a round spot on each showed a faint tinge of deeper color scarcely noticeable. Her tender blue eyes looked larger and brighter than usual. She protested to Alice Wilson that she was still in usual health, although the latter had finally persuaded her guest to consult Dr. Barnet. The Doctor had carefully diagnosed her case. He had subjected her chest to a most careful auscultation, employing the stethescope. He inquired particularly about how she rested at night, and asked casually if her parents were living, the state of their health, and of what diseases their immediate relatives had died.

May remembered the fear that possessed her years before, and knew perfectly well the drift of the doctor's remarks. But she felt so little ailment, except an annoying sense of lassitude, that she supposed his diagnosis had led him to mistake her disease. The doctor on his part looked very thoughtful, and said little. He merely remarked that the patient's system needed toning up, prescribed a tonic, advised a light, nutritious diet, and specially enjoined plenty of exercise in the open air, and retiring early. May felt greatly relieved to think that her case was not serious, though this impression was her own inference rather than a legitimate deduction from anything the doctor had said. Mrs. Wilson remained secretly anxious, and was on the point of speaking to Tom about it a half dozen times, but her husband uniformly advised her not to engage in such a delicate affair until there seemed a necessity for it.

The only real trouble that May acknowledged to herself, was the fact that her lover's conduct continued inexplicable. He still called often; he was still devoted; he sometimes alluded to their engagement, but he seemed no more disposed to have the wedding day fixed than at the time of their betrothal some years before. Sometimes she took what she called a "foolish crying fit." Was it any wonder that this gentle, affectionate girl, separated from parents, without brothers and sisters, without a single intimate friend of her own age and sex, alone in a great city, in spite of the bustle and gayety around her, should at times feel inexpressibly lonely and desolate? She could not seek relief from her doubts and fears by confiding them to her lover. She would not, for the world, have him know that she had any such doubts. When he noticed her serious, thoughtful expression, now grown habitual, she as-

sured him that she was a woman now, and not so giddy as she used to be. Neither could she confide in Alice fully without censuring her lover. Once in her anguish of soul, she exclaimed to Mrs. Wilson:

"Alice, I can't tell why, but I feel as if we never shall be married. Something dreadful is going to happen."

"Poor dear, you mustn't feel so. You are nervous. Things will be all right yet, I'm sure." But Alice did not feel the confidence she expressed. She suspected Tom, and blamed him. Such conduct she thought inexcusable. Her heart went out in sympathy for her patient, ill-treated friend.

May took the note, and recognized that it was in a woman's hand. She also noticed that it was unsealed. A great temptation assailed her. She would like to read it. She blushed with shame to think that she had been guilty of any desire to read her lover's private correspondence. She laid it on the mantelpiece in the parlor and sat down again to the book she had been reading. Soon she laid the book down and again looked at the note. Her heart was beating wildly. She glanced round hastily, no one was near. She trembled like an aspen, not entirely at the culpability of the comparatively trivial act she was about to commit, but at the fear that she might really discover something terrible within that plain white envelope. On second thought she felt justified, for was not her own happiness, her very life, in truth, at stake?

She opened the letter and read its brief contents hastily. It stabbed her to the heart, but she did not shriek out. She did not go into a frenzy of passion or a paroxysm of weeping. She realized that a sacrifice was demanded, and all she could do was to prepare herself. It was a sacrifice that would profit no one and break the hearts of her fond parents. She folded the note, not knowing what she did, and placed it back on the mantelpiece. For a few minutes the unhappy girl seemed unable to think. She sat down in a chair, murmuring to herself, "False, false, and I loved him so much. My presentiment will become a reality." Then she rose and walked slowly and painfully up the broad stairway to her own room. The effort seemed to tax her energies. She sat down, gasping for breath. "How could he be so cruel?" she mused. "I would have died for him."

Then she threw herself on the bed and burst into tears. Dinner was now ready, but she could never go down to meet

him. A servant came to tell her they were waiting. She excused herself with the plea that she had a very severe headache. She rose, and was bathing her face in cold water when Mrs. Wilson came up.

"May, are you not coming down to dinner? Tom has come."

"No, I do not feel able. Please excuse me."

"Shall I send you up a cup of tea?"

"No, nothing, thank you."

They dined without her, and the occasion was not a cheerful one. The evening wore away, and still May did not make her appearance. Tom Norwell sent his love up by his sister, and then May remembered that she had not told them of the note. Alice came down stairs and handed it to him. He seemed surprised at its contents, but merely remarked: "An invitation for this evening. It comes too late, however."

Chetta Ingledee was disappointed that Tom Norwell had neither called nor answered her note. She concluded that perhaps he did not think it pressing, and would come at his leisure. She felt sure, however, that no time was to be lost. She was confident that there was trouble ahead, and she would warn her friend at all hazards. That afternoon she went down town and inquired for Mr. Norwell. He happened to be in his private office and she was shown in.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Ingledee. Take a seat. I must apologize for not answering your note sooner. I received it too late to answer in person."

"Too late! Why, I gave it to Quill Malley about one o'clock, to be delivered at once."

"He delivered it at Wilson's about half-past three, and by mistake I did not get it till after nine."

"That is very strange."

"What can I do for you, Miss Ingledee?"

"I came to speak on a matter which is not exactly business, and yet"—here she paused. Norwell assured her that he was at her service whatever the matter might be.

"I don't know," she continued, hesitatingly, "that I should speak at all, for I may be mistaken. Of course, what I say is confidential." He sat looking at her greatly puzzled, but made no reply.

"There is going to be some kind of move in the stock market, I think. Protect yourselves."

"Oh!" This little interjection expressed a great deal. Norwell was surprised that the expected revelation was so insignificant and was moreover a little hurt to think that a woman should come in that way to advise the firm of Norwell & Wilson. His feelings were something like those of the man who sees the woman at his side attempt to take the lines when the horses get frightened. He secretly resented the proffered assistance.

"Miss Ingledee, we are always looking carefully to our interests. I think we have our business in very good shape."

"That may be, but you know, Mr. Norwell, that there is a great money power all around you, and money is merciless."

"Very true. We shall observe any unusual movements."

"I do not know much of such things, but I surmise there is some great movement afoot. I say it in confidence. I could tell no one else. Now you cannot be surprised."

"I thank you, Miss Ingledee, very much for your trouble. It is very kind of you."

She saw by his tone that he did not thank her at all. She rose and left, conscious of having done her duty by her oldest, dearest friend. She thought of her father, too, but the thought of him in nowise shook her belief that she had done right. But her good intentions had not been well received. She saw plainly that Norwell resented her well-meant efforts in his behalf. She left the office convinced, as she never had been before, that Norwell had never really loved her. Her pride revolted at the humiliation she had endured, and she resolved to forget him. Tom Norwell could never be anything to her again.

As Chetta left the office, John Wright entered. As we have seen, Norwell had become acquainted with him through Little Hackett. He was shown into the private office. He wished to inquire of Norwell, with whom he felt a sort of confidential relation, whether he had better sell out a certain holding of railroad stocks in which his little savings were invested. A friend of his who had a cousin in a broker's office had by that means heard a rumor that stocks of all kinds might suffer a decline.

"We will sell for you any time you wish," said Norwell. "Your stock is here in the vaults. We will give you that if you wish it."

"I don't hardly know what to do," said Wright, hesitat-

ing. He had attempted something of which he was entirely ignorant. He was alarmed about the result, but utterly powerless to foresee consequences or avert them. He had done a dangerous thing. The man who puts himself wholly into the power of another has placed a rope around his own neck. He has done as foolish a thing as that man on board a burning ship who loans his life preserver. Wright's little all was at stake, and he was anxious. The alarm of the ignorant and the lowly is more sudden, more clamorous, more unreasoning than that of the worldly wise.

"Do you want your money, Mr. Wright?"

"I can't say, sir. How much is it now?"

"If you sell now your two thousand will bring you twenty-five hundred."

"To lose it would ruin us all. It would kill Sarah, I think, for most of it come by her. Mr. Norwell, what would you do if you was a poor man in the same fix?"

"Mr. Wright, it is hardly our duty to advise. We simply follow orders. If you say sell, we sell. I have told you just what you can get. If you say hold on, we hold on."

"I hardly know what's best," said Wright, as he ran his fingers through his whiskers incessantly. A prolonged period of operating in stocks would certainly have left him whiskerless.

"Do you want my opinion on the future of that stock?"

"I'd be much obliged," replied Wright, as he pulled out an unusually long whisker and drew it nervously between his thumb and finger, watching it curl, then straightening it out, only to subject it to a more vigorous curling.

"I think that the stock will not go lower, and is very likely to go higher."

"Then I'll leave it in, if you say so."

"But really, Mr. Wright, I don't say so, you must decide for yourself."

This was like asking Wright to decide a disputed point in Hindoo philosophy. He gave his beard another raking that threatened to devastate one side of his face, and helplessly ejaculated:

"Well, I don't exactly know what's best. Still you ought to know best, and sence you say so, I guess I'll hold on to it."

"It's only my opinion, understand."

"Well, maybe I'll decide by next week, an' I'll drop in

an' let you know." Then he passed out, with precious little more ease of mind than he had when he entered. At the door he hesitated, turned round, looked in, then looked across the street, then looked in again, and placed his hand on the door knob, and finally left, all in doubt as to what he should have done, and half regretting that he had not done differently. The speculator seldom takes his ease on a bed of roses.

CHAPTER L.

MR. ROKER SPRINGS A MINE.

When important information was to be obtained at all, Horace Roker usually had it. He had known for several days that some of the great money kings, including his employer, were about to make a raid on certain stocks, and that the bulls and bears of Wall street were to engage in another set to. Mr. Roker had quietly invested a large sum of money on his own account. He was already a rich man, and rapidly growing richer. He knew now, almost to a certainty, that Chetta Ingledee was inimical to her father's interests, although the intercepted note which he had read was so very vague in its terms.

He determined to watch this affair carefully. If he succeeded in detecting anything that savored of treachery on the part of the young lady toward her father, he would accomplish an important object. If he were the first to make it known, he might, perhaps, avert a domestic explosion, and at the same time furnish a very convincing proof that some disposition should be made of so dangerous and insidious a foe. In such a contingency, he thought there would be little difficulty in securing the active co-operation of Mr. Ingledee in that long cherished matrimonial scheme. Nothing was more natural than that Mr. Ingledee should advance the interests of the man who had so carefully looked to the interests of Mr. Ingledee.

Roker set about the delicate and difficult task of finding out, if possible, what Chetta Ingledee had told Tom Norwell. As a first step, he would carefully sound Norwell under the

guise of business, as to whether the firm had disposed of certain stocks that were to be raided. With this design, he called at the offices of Norwell & Wilson, and had a rather protracted interview with Tom Norwell himself. These two men had always been on speaking terms, though neither liked the other. Norwell thought Roker a schemer, though never suspecting half his duplicity, and resented his attentions to Chetta Ingledee, even while admitting that he himself had no right to stand in the way. On the other hand, Roker hated Norwell as a dangerous rival.

Norwell was polite, but not communicative. After considerable adroit maneuvering, Roker felt satisfied that if the firm had been warned they had not profited to any extent by the information. Then he hazarded another step by inquring carelessly:

"By the way, Mr. Norwell, have you seen our friend Miss Ingledee lately?"

Norwell looked at him curiously for a moment, and then replied:

"I do not see Miss Ingledee often of late. Perhaps you could give me information concerning her. I hear you are rather attentive in that direction."

"Well, yes, I am on a friendly footing there."

"I suppose I may congratulate you then?"

"No," disclaimed Roker, "hardly that yet. Sometime, perhaps." Roker felt that he was on dangerous ground, and that any confidential communications between Chetta and Norwell would place him in a very humiliating position. But he had no fears now of any understanding between them, and since Norwell was off the track it was best to shunt him completely into the ditch.

"Since congratulations on such occasions are in order," continued Norwell, "I suppose the young lady is to be congratulated too."

"What am I to understand by that insinuation?"

"Speaking plainly, I mean that she is too good for you."

"Indeed! It is very kind of you to say so."

"She is a warm-hearted, noble woman."

"So much the better for the man who gets her. I suppose, Mr. Norwell, you think I am incapable of appreciating such qualities, since you are so good as to intimate that I lack them myself."

"I intimated nothing of the sort, but since you admit it,

Mr. Roker, we will agree that you *do* lack them. You ought to keep your selfishness to yourself instead of imposing it on others." Norwell was plainly losing control of his temper in allowing himself to be dragged into such a conversation at all. His bitterness of feeling, however, originated in a generous impulse, for since he could not marry Chetta Ingledee he would like her to get a husband who was worthy of her. It was Roker's turn now to make a terrible retort. His long pent up resentment was no longer to be restrained, and he, unfortunately, was prepared to inflict a terrible blow.

"Mr. Norwell, since we are bestowing confidences, and speaking plainly, you will pardon me if I allude to some events in your own history. You have called me heartless, and I shall not deny it. Now what do you say of the man who leads a young, confiding girl on step by step till she loves him? teaches her by degrees to love him better than her own life and then deliberately inflicts upon her the most cruel suffering which the human heart is capable of experiencing, the pangs of jealousy and neglected love? What is such a man? Is he heartless?" Norwell had listened in astonishment to what seemed like a revelation.

"Roker," at length he said, in evident distress, "you are mistaken. People may have talked, but I never led Miss Ingledee on."

"Mr. Norwell, stop and think. Is that man kind who wins the heart of a gentle, unsuspecting girl, a girl who is as pure as an angel, and who devotes her very life to the man she loves, and then deliberately trifles with her love till her poor heart turns to ashes, and the fountains of life run low—is that man kind?"

"My God, man! What do you mean?"

"I mean May Bryce."

"No! No! It is false! I have never done this. I love her truly."

"Then you have committed one of the greatest wrongs man can commit against woman. You have repaid devotion with indifference and neglect."

"It is false. I love her still."

"Then why do you delay marrying her?"

"Mr. Roker, if you will excuse my saying so, that is my own affair."

"It is *not* your own affair. If you ever intend to marry her you must do it at once."

"What do you mean?" inquired Norwell anxiously. "Do not keep me in suspense."

"Can you not see for yourself that the rose has faded from her cheek, and the elasticity from her step? Your betrothed has only a few months to live."

"Oh God!" exclaimed Norwell, springing from his seat. "Is it so bad as that? I know she is not strong. No, Roker you are trifling with me. This is a most cruel and cowardly revenge."

Great drops of sweat stood on the forehead of the unhappy man. Roker could not have inflicted a more sudden and awful revenge on his rival. Even his cold heart seemed to soften in this hour of triumph. He said in gentler tone, though every word was a knell in the ear of the unhappy man before him:

"Norwell, I have spoken the truth. Your betrothed has but a short time on earth. Go to her. Comfort her few remaining days, for only you can do it. If I misjudged you, I beg your pardon for it."

"God forgive me, has it come to this; I thank you, Roker, for telling me this. No it can not be. You are mistaken. Oh, how blind I have been. Why didn't you take your revenge sooner? I thank you. But," he exclaimed with the energy of a sudden hope, "I'll save her yet. She must not die."

"I hope she may recover full health," said Roker, as he quietly took his hat and left the office.

Norwell closed the door and sat down to think. This cruel blow had been so quick and dreadful that it inflicted the keenest pangs of mental agony. He saw the terrible consequences as pictured by Roker. He could not realize how they had been brought about. By degrees his ideas grew clearer. Little by little the mist that obscured his mental vision was withdrawn, and he saw distinctly just as one sees through a slowly-dissolving fog the form of a great ship which at first is only a spectral craft; the outline of the sails may be detected first; next the masts, and finally the whole view, ship, sails, masts, sailors, all stand out in the clear light, one perfect picture. Norwell understood now, with painful distinctness, things which had passed unnoticed before, or which had puzzled him.

He saw clearly why May had so often brought up the subject of their wedding day. He could not understand why

one so young should display what seemed to him such unnecessary anxiety, and wish to hasten the auspicious day. There was plenty of time, for both were still young. His sister's hints concerning long engagements were very plain now. The slight loss of flesh and the brilliance of the eye that he thought only enhanced the beauty of his beloved, now had a new and terrible meaning. They were only the visible marks of an insidious, deadly disease. Her remark once made in their sweet confidence that it would kill her to lose him, suddenly flashed across his mind in its true and terrible significance. In an agony of remorse he groaned aloud: "It may be too late. How cruel I have been. I have crushed the life out of the beautiful flower I promised to nourish." Then hope, which springs forever in the human breast, came to his relief. "It cannot be too late. I will marry her at once, and happiness will bring her back to health. No, it cannot be so bad. Roker is mistaken."

Wilson entered to consult his partner on important business, but found to his surprise that Norwell could not talk business. He would suddenly start and ask his partner what he had been saying, and then relapse into an absent-minded condition. Wilson told him that there was a decided downward tendency in some of the stocks of which they had large holdings. Would it be best to sell before the decline was serious, and avoid dangerous contingencies?

Norwell finally remarked that he did not feel well, and should go home for the day. He told Wilson to do as he pleased in the matter, and abruptly left the office. Wilson, unwilling to act alone, waited for further consultation with his partner.

May Bryce, after the evening on which she had read that fatal note, had been ill from the effects of the intense nervous strain to which she had been subjected, together with the delicate condition of her health that was rapidly approaching invalidism. Mrs. Wilson was alarmed, but concealed her own fears, lest she might, by exposing them, make worse the condition of the unhappy girl.

After reflection there had gradually sprung up in May's mind a deep indignation at the treatment to which she had been subjected. She resolved, at first, never to see her unworthy lover again. She sat down to write to her mother, explaining everything, and asking money to take her to California where she could pour out her sorrows and receive the

of his own. He had not at the time forgotten that on a former occasion Chetta Ingledee had obtained, as he believed, some very important information. He also suspected that she was capable of furnishing this valuable knowledge to persons who by no means ought to have it. Saying nothing whatever to any one, he determined to keep a very close lookout.

One day Chetta came into the office as she frequently did to go to luncheon with her father, who took her little attentions as a matter of course. They were his due, but since the death of his son Mr. Ingledee acted like a man who has no other object in life than to fill it up, and that could be best done by pursuing still more eagerly the old passion. Mr. Roker was present and she exchanged with him the customary salutations, as if they had been only casual acquaintances. Roker had obtained Ingledee's permission to ask Chetta's hand in marriage, on the express condition that the father was to use no influence whatever in the case. His daughter might mate to suit herself, provided she did not contract a foolish marriage. When Mr. Roker's suit had failed, for the time being at least, Ingledee thought no more about it. Roker soon excused himself, and father and daughter were left alone together.

"Papa, I came to take you out to lunch. We'll have a pleasant visit together. You need recreation, you look tired."

"I am not tired, daughter. We must all grow old sometime."

"But you must not grow old so fast. Quit this office, and then you will grow young again." She was bravely trying to appear happy, though her own heart had its sore disappointment which she could never confide to any one.

"Daughter, quitting the business would be like quitting life. It can not be done."

"Of course you love it, papa. But where shall we go to-day?"

"Come to think of it, Chetta, I can not go out with you to-day. I have an appointment at one-thirty with some gentlemen."

"I'll wait."

"It is important, and doubtless will take some time. No, I think you'd better come for me to-morrow."

"I'm so sorry."

Just then a messenger boy announced Mr. Ophir and Mr. Chrysolite. Chetta at once withdrew with a suspicion of

what the important business was, and her anger flamed hot instantly. She was ashamed for her father and herself. Her feelings of right were outraged. She wished that she had never returned to enjoy this hateful wealth. But when she thought of her powerlessness to stay this dangerous tide that was undermining gradually the well-being of the community and of her duty to a bereaved father, she grew calmer, and resolved to bear her burdens and do her duty as best she could.

Horace Roker saw her go out immediately after the entrance of Messrs. Ophir and Chrysolite. He too, was thinking. Putting on his hat as if to go to lunch, he passed into the street and took the same direction as that pursued by the young lady. In fact, he never lost sight of Miss Ingledee until she entered Pipe Malley & Co.'s store. Roker loitered in the vicinity to see what would happen. Chetta staid in the store but a few minutes when she reappeared with a small package of fruit in her hand and walked quickly toward Broadway. There she took an up-town omnibus. Roker still suspected that some communication would be made with Tom Norwell. Under pretence of business he went round to the offices of Norwell & Wilson, to see if Quill Malley brought a note. But after talking over with Wilson, Norwell being absent, every possible phase of the transaction concerning which he had ostensibly called, and making all possible delay, no message came.

Late in the afternoon he went round again under pretence that he had forgotten to mention a particular point. Then he casually mentioned certain stocks, among them C. & P., Midland, Gridiron and People's Telegraph. He learned what he wished to know, namely, that the firm of Norwell & Wilson had not put their large holdings on the market. Just as he was ready to leave, Quill Malley entered and inquired for Tom Norwell, saying he had a message for him. "Mr. Norwell has just gone for the day," replied Wilson, "but he will be at our house for dinner. I'll give you his address, No. 19 Amsterdam Place. Here is mine," and Wilson produced a card; "if he is not at his lodgings, go direct to that address. If there is no hurry I'll take it for you, young man." Quill, however, was not inclined to intrust the note to other hands. He went out, and Roker immediately followed him. Some distance up the street Roker quickened his pace and overtook Quill, who was now a tall, strapping boy, almost a man's height.

"Hold on there, Malley," he called out in a subdued tone.

Quill gave a sudden start and shied away toward the other side of the pavement. Though he was grown so large, he had never outgrown his fear of this man who once had so thoroughly held him in his power.

"I'm in a hurry," he answered, moving on.

"I used to know you," continued Roker.

"Guess yer did," said Quill, perceptibly quickening his pace.

"You used to do some business for me."

"Wot if I did?" replied Quill sullenly. "There's no use a castin' them there old things up." Quill could not quite free his mind from the apprehension that perhaps some of his other shortcomings might be "cast up," too, and perhaps the lock-up might be mentioned before the interview ended.

"I meant no harm," said Roker. "I only wondered if you're in the same line now."

"I'm workin' fur the firm on a poorty good sal'ry now," was the evasive rejoinder.

"Of course it would pay well, and not be hard."

"Well, wot is it anyhow? Wot are ye drivin' at?"

"Do you want to make five dollars?"

"Do you take me fur a blamed fool? You bet I'll make five dollars if I kin."

"You have a note for Tom Norwell." Quill started; he had not seen Roker in the office.

"How did you ketch onto that?"

"No difference how. I'll give you five dollars to let me see it."

"It's personal an' pertickler."

"That makes no difference. I'll only look at the handwriting."

"Gimme the five dollars first."

Quill eagerly took the attractive little slip of green paper, and handed Roker the note. That gentleman's scalp darted forward at an alarming rate, as he recognized the familiar handwriting and address, "Mr. Thomas Norwell, Present." Quill was a little alarmed, lest the gentleman in an unguarded moment should turn his head completely inside out. Roker looked at the address, then turning the envelope over, noticed that the writer had, either through carelessness or haste, left it unsealed, and the flap was not tucked in.

"I want to read this, Malley."

"Looky hyur, Mister, that isn't fair. You said you was only goin' to look at the han'writin'."

"I must read it," said Roker, as he moved a few feet back into the entrance of an alley where he would not be so readily observed by people passing.

"Now looky hyur," remonstrated Quill, as Roker unfolded the note. "That's not the square thing. She would be awful mad if she knowed it. You said you wanted to see the writin'. People gits into trouble a openin' other people's letters."

"Not if it's never found out. Keep still. Here's another five. Now do you suppose you are ever going to say anything about it?"

"You kin bet yer bottom dollar I hain't. I wont never breathe it to a mortal soul," protested Mr. Quill Malley, as he slipped the crumpled bill into his pocket beside the other. Roker's argument was very short and very convincing. The missive, which Roker had been so anxious to see, was apparently in itself very innocent. It read simply:

"MR. NORWELL:

Can you call this evening for a few minutes? I wish particularly to see you. I have something to tell you in which you are greatly interested. Do not fail to come.

CHETTA INGLEDEE."

"When did she give you this note?"

"This afternoon. She said I was to take it to the office before three o'clock, but Pipe sent me on a urrint, an' I didn't git there in time. So I'm takin' it up to his boardin' house."

"Here take it and be lively, and remember if anything happens you can be locked up for this piece of business."

With this little piece of gratuitous consolation from Mr. Roker, Quill started on his errand up town. But this innocent-looking note had not yet performed its full measure of mischief. Ringing the bell at Wilson's residence, having previously gone to 19 Amsterdam Place to find that Norwell had gone out, Quill Malley was met at the door by May Bryce, who sometimes answered the bell herself, not having fully settled into the city habit of delegating the most trivial duties to servants.

"Does Mr. Norwell live here? I've a note fur 'im."

"No, Mr. Wilson lives here. But Mr. Norwell will be here soon. I will deliver the note."

Quill handed her the note unhesitatingly and took his de-

more to Ingledee. Wilson did not think that any help could be expected from that quarter, but Norwell still hoped that his long acquaintance with the family might count for something.

Mr. Ingledee was an attentive listener, but not disposed to step into the market for the purpose of saving others. He preferred to let his own stocks take their chances rather than risk hundreds of thousands to aid a friend. He argued that since Ophir, Chrysolite and others were on the other side it would be madness for him to attempt to enter the markets against them. Then Norwell knew what he might have known at first, that such men count friendship as nothing when weighed against gold.

"But will not your own properties suffer severely, Mr. Ingledee, if you do not protect them?"

"My railway properties are too valuable to suffer any permanent depreciation in value. As I own my holdings absolutely I can afford to see them decline twenty to thirty points without any uneasiness. They are sure to rally, and I lose nothing whatever."

The fact was, that Ophir, Ingledee and Chrysolite had entered into a conspiracy to produce a panic, slaughter prices and transfer vast blocks of certain coveted stocks from the small operators to the great money kings. Norwell, seeing that nothing could be expected from Ingledee, went back to his office in despair. Things looked very black on the street. Bankers and brokers were hourly closing their doors. Men in despair rushed hither and thither frantically, seeking aid, which they could obtain only on the most exorbitant terms. From one to two per cent. per day was paid for the use of money. Still these wily fishers sat in their offices and with grim satisfaction, hour by hour, slowly drew the fatal net a little tighter round their struggling, terror-stricken prey. Like inquisitors of old, they smiled while their victims writhed under the torture. The demon that is in man is a part of his very nature; successive ages only change its form. The sword is no longer the emblem of the god of rapine; instead, the dollar sits exalted while busy criers call from dome and minaret, "Bow down and worship; I am the great I Am."

Norwell and Wilson went home that night with heavy hearts. Unless a favorable change took place next day they must close their doors and face utter ruin. Affairs were discussed at the dinner table anxiously, but no favorable indi-

cations could be discerned ahead. May Bryce seemed affected by the news least of all. She was so happy in the new-found knowledge that her lover was all her own to have forevermore, without any perplexing doubts or dire forebodings, that she scarcely cared for the threatenings of impending poverty. She forgot all Dr. Barnet's admonitory advice, and for a brief time was again the same simple-hearted, happy maiden of her girlish days. She deceived herself and all of them with this sudden elasticity of mind and body.

Bidding her lover a fond good-night, which he had stamped with a brace of sweet kisses, she retired to rest. She was too happy to sleep. Her cough troubled her, too, though, strange to say, she thought little of it, and was scarcely conscious of a slight pain in the chest that accompanied it. She thought over the trouble in which her lover and his partner were. She wished she could do something to aid them. Suddenly she thought of Chetta Ingledee. Now that May knew she had finally triumphed over that dangerous rival, she no longer feared her. Instead, there was a feeling of sympathy for the one whom she believed had been so grievously disappointed. May thought of Tom's interview with Mr. Ingledee, and formed a sudden resolution. She would go to Chetta and throw herself on the generosity of her former rival. She would plead for Tom and procure Chetta's intercession with Mr. Ingledee in favor of the firm who were so sorely pressed. May thought to herself, "If she ever loved him as I do she will do so much for him."

She was so happy in discovering this plan, the success of which she never doubted for a moment, that her excited brain refused to seek the sweet repose of sleep for a long time. Next morning the plan recurred to her on her first awakening. It still seemed good, though somehow the healthful light of day made it look different from what it appeared during the darkness of the night. It admitted of some doubts now. Daylight is a capital sieve to filter moonlight fancies through. May strove to make out a breakfast on a poached egg and some toast, though with very little appetite. Then putting on her cloak she slipped from the house and started directly for the splendid Ingledee residence on Fifth avenue.

She gave the name "Miss Bryce" to the servant, and was shown into the parlor at once. In a few minutes Miss Ingledee came down and greeted her visitor politely. There was

a curious look of inquiry in her eyes as she welcomed the caller and asked about her health.

"You do not look so strong as usual, Miss Bryce."

"No, I have not been in my usual health lately, but I think I am improving now."

Chetta was astonished at the change which had taken place in this beautiful girl. The rosy flush of health had vanished from the cheeks once so plump, but now pale and sunken. The complexion was very pallid except a bright spot on either cheek. The pearly luster of the bright eye was unnatural. The quick breathing might have been the result of excitement, of vigorous exercise, or of disease.

"Have you not walked too fast? Shall I ring for some wine?"

"No thank you, Miss Ingledee. I feel a little faint, that is all. I have walked some distance, rather farther than usual."

Then there was an awkward pause. Miss Ingledee knew at first that this girl had come to her with a purpose. What that purpose was she could not divine, but it must be in some way connected with a subject neither of the women cared to discuss with the other. Behind her courtesy there lurked the old dislike. This was natural. She believed that May Bryce had stolen her lover. All would have been well had not this fair-faced stranger come between them with her good looks and artless ways. She never once blamed the man. She could not forgive the woman. This stranger had taken her lover; what more did she want? Had she come to exhibit her triumph?

May was the first to break the silence. It was a difficult matter to approach the object of her visit. There were things hard to think of and much harder to speak about. But she had come, ready to make any sacrifice of her own feelings; to do anything consistent with womanly dignity and honor to save her lover. In spite of herself she could not control her emotion, and spoke with a painful catching of her breath:

"Miss Ingledee, I have come to ask a great favor of you for one who—for a friend. I know you are generous and I trust, magnanimous." Chetta bowed only in reply and waited. "Your father is very rich and very influential. Could you intercede with him and get him to use his influence for—for some one?"

"Miss Bryce, speak plainly. To whom do you refer, and what is it you wish?"

"I mean Mr. Norwell," was the low reply, which cost an effort.

"And what do you want *me* to do for *him?*"

"Perhaps you don't know, but his firm is in great straits. If your father could only do something."

"I am powerless."

"Please do not say that, Miss Ingledee," plead the anxious girl. "You cannot say that. I know how good you are to every one, and you must be kind-hearted. If there is anything in the past"—she stopped short; she could not mention that.

Chetta Ingledee rose with an angry gesture and walked to the window. This mention of the past had brought up all her own secret wrongs. It steeled her heart instantly. "You speak of the past. What have I to do with the past? What are Mr. Norwell's affairs to me? Ask your own heart; you know best."

"Forgive me, Miss Ingledee, for alluding to it. I meant no offense," said May in alarm. "Only think of your station and the good you may do."

"And how," exclaimed Chetta, with a passionate vehemence, "can you come here with triumph in your heart to ask such a favor of me? Do you come to taunt me?" For a moment passion had got the better of this high-spirited woman and she felt ready to crush and humble her rival.

"Miss Ingledee, Miss Ingledee, you mistake me. I was thinking only of *his* interests. Let us forget all that has happened. Think only of what you would do for any human being whom you could save from ruin."

"I cannot save him."

"Your father can do everything. Will you speak to him? Will you try? Only try. *Do* say that you will." The pleading face of this stricken woman was piteous to behold. It touched the heart of Miss Ingledee, and she replied in a gentler tone:

"It is useless now. It is too late."

"Too late! Is that all your answer? If you had ever really loved him it would never be too late."

"Love!" ejaculated Chetta, scornfully. "And do you come here to give me lessons in love? When you have lavished a lifetime of love on one object then speak, and not till then." Thrown off her guard for a moment by the sudden recollection of her own bitter disappointment and this imputation on the genuineness of her love, Chetta Ingledee had betrayed her

secret to her successful rival. She rose and turned away impatiently, to conceal her vexation.

"Forgive me, Miss Ingledee, I was wrong and unjust."

"Love! What do you think is the meaning of love? What could *you* do for him? What sacrifice could *you* make?"

"I could die for him," answered May, with a pathos that struck to the heart of the haughty woman who stood indignantly before her. "I can do more than that, yes, more than that, Miss Ingledee. Only help him, save him from ruin, and I will—yes, I will give him up to you." She dropped at the feet of Chetta and went into a fit of hysterical sobbing, that was pitiable to hear. Chetta raised the weeping girl tenderly, and placed her in an easy chair. May breathed so hard that she was for a moment alarmed.

"There, Miss Bryce, say no more. You hardly know what you are asking. I fear we have both been talking nonsense. Let us be rational."

"Then you *will* help him?" said May, as an angelic smile shone through her tears.

"Miss Bryce, I have told you the truth. I would save him if I could for your sake, and for the past," she added with an effort. "But I can not help him now. My father," she said, lowering her voice, "would not permit interference in such a thing."

"You are his only child. Don't you think you could persuade him?"

"I can do nothing. It gives me pain to say it, but he is a merciless man. And probably he could do nothing now if he would. Had Mr. Norwell listened in time all would have been well. I wrote him asking him to come and I could tell him something."

"Was that what you wanted to see him for?" Then May stopped suddenly, realizing instantly that she had disclosed a secret. "Oh dear, everything seems to go wrong in this world."

Chetta noticed May's surprise at this reference to the note and her uneasiness. She knew something had gone amiss, but could not guess what. She tried to soothe the suffering girl, for whom she now felt a tender pity.

"All things are in the hands of Him who orders all wisely; we can only wait. Calm yourself, or you will be ill. Why, how feverish you are!" she exclaimed, as she felt May's temples. "You must have some refreshment. I will have a lemonade made."

"If you please, thank you. I am very thirsty.

Chetta then sat down beside May and talked to her kindly. She thought how unfit this simple country girl was to struggle with the dangers and difficulties that constantly beset life's pathway. Her feelings of anger and jealousy had turned to compassion for the poor creature before her whose life was fast ebbing in this fruitless struggle. May drank the cooling lemonade and ate a small cracker.

"You are very kind, Miss Ingledee. I thank you very much."

"Miss Bryce, I wish I could do all you ask. But do not be downhearted, things may be all right at last."

"We can always hope."

Chetta sadly remembered that on one subject there was no longer even hope for her. She ordered the coachman to get out a carriage and she took May home tenderly bidding her adieu as they parted.

Chetta next ordered the man to drive directly to Pipe Malley & Co.'s store. There was some mystery connected with that note of hers to Norwell, and she was determined to find out what it was. She had been pained at his treatment of her when she called to warn him, and was mystified by May's evident distress on allusion to the note. Quill Malley happened to be alone in the store. He replied to her greeting with an awkward attempt at politeness. His usual bashful manner in the presence of ladies seemed to be intensified this morning. He glanced furtively at Chetta's face when she entered, but did not meet her steady gaze. As an excuse he employed himself with some fictitious arrangements under the counter, then turned his back and sorted oranges busily. She talked pleasantly, waiting for him to get through and look up which he seemed in no hurry to do, as he answered from time to time without turning. At last she began:

"Quill, I wish to ask you a question." Then he ceased work, and came and leaned over the counter, but began tracing figures on a sheet of wrapping paper, leaning his head so as to hide his face.

"Quill, did you deliver my note the other day as directed?"

"Pipe sent me on a urrint. *I* couldn't help it," he replied, putting himself on the defensive instantly.

"Of course you couldn't help the delay. Where did you take it then?"

"I took it to Norwell's & Wilson's office. He wasn't

in, so I took it up to his partner's house. He told me to do it." Quill said this in an injured tone as if he had already been accused of a grave crime.

"Who told you to take it up there?"

"Wy, Mr. Wilson, of course."

"That was proper. Whom did you give the note to?"

"To a girl 'ut come to the door."

"A servant?"

"No, that light-haired girl that Mr. Norwell goes with sometimes."

"Quill, you have been very careless," she replied, with a tone of displeasure.

"How'd I know she wasn't to be trusted. Y' ought to sealed it."

"Wasn't it sealed?" she asked quickly.

"Naw it wasn't," replied Quill, with a vague suspicion that his defensive tactics had betrayed him into saying too much.

"She may have read it, thinking there was an answer?"

"I dunno. I tell yer I seed nobody read it." Mr. Malley's actions now assumed those of the highly injured individual. The last interrogatory had touched an exceedingly delicate spot, not in his conscience, for that rested pretty comfortable on ordinary occasions, having learned to take cat-naps on duty, but in his fears, the region of which was subject to periods of abnormal excitement. It behooved him to strengthen the position at once by a good round lie.

"Somebody has read it. I asked you to deliver it to Mr. Norwell personally. You did very wrong, Quill."

"Now how do yer 'spose I could help it if somebody read it. I tell yer I seed nobody read it. Hope I may die if I did. Honor bright, wot's the use o' bein' so hard on a feller when he's doin' the best he kin!"

"Quill," she said, in a strange yet not stern tone, that he never heard her use before, "I trusted you. You have been careless, and mischief has been done." She turned to go.

"I'm awful sorry, Miss Ingledee. I hope it wasn't pertickler."

"It *was* particular, Quill, but there is no helping it now. Be more careful in future."

Quill's sorrow was to be understood in a modified sense. He did not regret particularly his act of treachery in itself, for it was a matter of business. But he did regret that it could

not have happened with some one else than his teacher, whom he really loved. He was sorry that he had vexed her, and his regret was considerably magnified by the possibility that he may have lost a good friend who had many times helped him, and was willing to help him much more. He reflected rather gloomily that he perhaps had for a paltry sum in hand sold his expectations of obtaining many times that amount. He was a little uneasy, too, lest she might somehow find out that he had shown the note to Roker. Then if any trouble grew out of it Quill was sure to get his share.

Quill's experience of the morning had a depressing effect on his spirits during the day. He never once executed a break-down in the little back storage room to the edification of a young man who kept a peanut establishment on the sidewalk, and dropped in occasionally to indulge in gymnastic performances during the intervals between serving customers. He abstained during the entire forenoon from eating, a thing beyond precedent, and which the observant proprietor took as an infallible indication of serious bodily ailment. Figs, raisins and nuts had lost their charms for Quill, and he passed by the over-ripe bananas, four for five cents, with a look of self-denial that would have done credit to an anchorite. Strangest, most incredible of all, he carefully washed his hands and face twice during the forenoon in an apparent fit of abstraction. Whether this may not have been a deliberate and violent penance on his part will perhaps never be known. All this strange conduct was carefully noted by Pipe, who finally could no longer restrain his curiosity to know the cause of such unaccountable proceedings.

"Quill, what's the matter with you to-day. Yer actin' awful funny. Ain't you sick?"

"Sick nothin'," was the crusty reply. "You must be sick yerself."

Pipe was, indeed, sorely puzzled. At dinner time he mentioned this unaccountable conduct privately to his mother. Together they were still unable to solve the problem. Quill's appetite seemed to hold out in spite of the dangerous symptoms at the store. He dispatched for dinner two plates of browned beef and potatoes, bread in proportion, two cups of coffee, a dish of cabbage slaw, two big apple dumplings, and a few minor accessories. The theory of a disease based on a loss of appetite was abandoned as untenable. Mrs. Malley asked, after Quill had eaten for some time in absolute silence:

"Quill, honey, what's the matter with you; are you sick?"

"Matter? Wot d'ye see the matter? Do I look sick? Gimme s'more beef an' potater." Then he relapsed into silence again, plying his knife and fork viciously by way of protest against this distasteful insinuation of poor health.

CHAPTER LII.

TRUE UNTO DEATH.

The crisis in the monetary center of the republic has run its course and done its terrible work. A few men have won the millions which the many lost. A steady stream has flowed into the coffers of Messrs. Ophir, Ingledee, Chrysolite and a few others, who happened by chance or otherwise, to get on the right side of the market. Smaller concerns have closed their doors in a score of instances. The important house of Norwell & Wilson has been obliged to suspend after suffering tremendous losses in the heavy decline. An angry mob sways to and fro in Wall street near the offices of Ophir and Ingledee. Ominous threats are occasionally heard, and a trivial incident might incite a terrible riot. A large force of police is in readiness to quell any disturbance. Occasionally the names of Ophir and Ingledee are coupled with threats of violence, but the day wears slowly away, a drizzling rain sets in, and the crowd gradually disperses. But the men who have suffered most, heed not the lowering clouds and the chill rains. Fires of hate and revenge burn fiercely in their bosoms beyond the power of the steady dripping rain to quell.

Those who have lost by the failure of Norwell & Wilson crowd up the steps of the building, block the sidewalk, try to peer through the closed shutters, and clamor for admittance. They crowd the policemen who try to keep the sidewalk clear, and stubbornly refuse to move on. Boys and idlers add to the throng, and indulge in ill-natured or jocose remarks according to their mood. But, for the crowding, anxious, haggard men who have lost perhaps the savings of a lifetime, there is but one thing possible. They stare at the ominous word "Closed" with straining eyes again and again, as if, by some possibility, they hoped to discover that they had read it wrong,

that the doors were really open, and the firm paying all their creditors in full. On that modest piece of white card board they read their doom, but refuse to accept it. It is a cruelly hard thing for a man to realize that the fruits of a lifetime are swept away in an hour. The weary years of labor, the little devices of economy, the painful self-denial of old clothes and plain food, the pleasures foregone, the loved ones who endured all that old age might be lifted over the hard spots in life's pathway, the thousand and one discomforts of small savings, the knowledge that life is now perhaps to be ended in hopeless, pinching poverty, as bodily strength fails and comforts are a necessity—all these are summed up in those two fatal words, "BANK CLOSED."

By some mistake of a clerk a few men and pleading women were admitted at a side door. Wilson managed to get rid of most of them on the promise that possibly the firm could resume to-morrow when their interests would all be looked after. Some were reasonable, others utterly unreasoning and threatening. Some of those who had held on to their stocks until their investment was nearly wiped out of existence, blamed the firm for not advising them in time to sell. Some who had bought stocks that had declined very little, thought there was some trick about the order to close the doors. They wanted their money, and were in some cases insultingly clamorous.

Among others who had entered were Pipe Malley and John Wright. The former came through sympathy with his friend Norwell, the latter half crazed with anxiety, wanted his stocks or the money for them.

"Mr. Norwell, can you ruin a poor man this way?" said Wright, as he pushed himself into Norwell's presence.

"Mr. Wright, I have ruined no one. I am ruined myself."

"Give me back my principal and I'll ask no more."

"I can not give you back your principal. The stock has declined till it is not worth half what you paid for it."

"I want my money. I've got to have my money. It belongs to Sarah, an' it'll kill her to lose it. I've slaved all my life for Sarah and the children. It was a bad day when I ever put my money in the hands of rich men." He went on in an incoherent way, continually repeating, "I've got to have my money, I tell you. It's Sarah's and the children's, an' it'll kill her. Can't you give me some of it?" he finally asked. "Just as much as you can."

sympathies of fond parents. But she had not penned half a dozen lines till she saw how impossible was her task. Her revelation would only break the hearts of her father and mother. Then her own womanly pride revolted at the idea of revealing the base deception of her adored lover. She could not do it. She tore up the letter, and went to her only adviser, Mrs. Wilson, for consolation.

As May laid her head gently on the shoulder of her friend, she longed to confide all her sad troubles. But pride again said no, and besides, Alice would be very angry with him. She was already making excuses for him, and hoping there might be some mistake. She would give him one more opportunity to explain if he sought it. Alice caressed the head that leaned upon her, as a mother would stroke the head of a child. To her eye this gentle, fading young creature grew every day more and more like a child.

"My dear, you are not well. You are feverish."

"I am so weak. The least exertion makes me tired and short of breath."

"I heard you coughing again this morning. Do you take your medicine regularly?"

"Yes, but the cough does not disturb me much, if I only was as strong as I used to be."

"May, you must take better care of yourself. You are not happy. You are worrying about something. Tell me everything." The tender blue eyes drooped, but she said nothing. "You did not come down to meet him yesterday evening. Is there anything going wrong? Is it a lover's quarrel? Tell me, dear." Again that weary head sought the support of that sympathizing friend. The broken spirit sought relief in a flood of tears.

"There now, don't cry, child. I'll make it right. I'll give him a good talking to."

"I think I shall go to my aunt's."

"That is not best, dear. You know there is no company there, and you get very lonely, besides Tom—you must stay here." The latter argument was sufficient. She would give him one more opportunity.

"You had better go and see Dr. Barnet again to-day."

"I'll do anything you wish if you will not speak to him yet—not just yet."

"I shall not speak without your permission."

May again consulted the Doctor. She had no heart to do

anything. She answered his questions in a listless, indifferent way as if she cared little whether she lived or died. She betrayed no fear; he could not discover that she felt any. She did not ask anxiously, as patients sometimes do, whether he could not cure her, and could he not give her a *sure* cure, as if a doctor could save life. He was thoroughly puzzled, but, as usual, drew the veil of professional secrecy closely around his treatment. He was astonished at the rapid progress of the dreadful disease, which he saw at first had obtained a dangerous foothold. The temperature was high, the pulse quick, the cheek hectic, the breathing difficult on slight exertion. And yet there was no severe pain anywhere. The disease had made in a few days the progress which usually required weeks. The mental apathy of the patient greatly puzzled the doctor. It was in direct contrast with that hopefulness which usually to the very last cheers the sinking victim of that fell destroyer, consumption.

The doctor prescribed some medicines; one of them was to relieve the cough which in a few days had rapidly grown troublesome. He prescribed light, nutritious diet, and urged the necessity of rest and quiet. He recommended riding out whenever the weather was fine, and urged the necessity of mental quiet. She asked him whether he would recommend the climate of California. After a moment's reflection, he replied in the negative. In truth, May was thinking all the time of her lover, and not of her own condition. The old fear she had of consumption when a young girl, was entirely gone. It was swallowed up in the new fear that she might lose him, which to her was a calamity more terrible than death.

Norwell, on leaving the office, went directly to the house of his brother-in-law, and inquired for Mrs. Wilson. Alice met him in the parlor, and knew at once there was a crisis of some kind in his affairs.

"What is it, Tom?" she asked breathlessly.

"Alice, Roker has just told me that May is ill, very ill. Is it true?"

"I fear it is, Tom."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner? How blind I've been, how heedless, how brutal."

"There, Tom," she said kindly, "that is useless. Be calm. Let us talk rationally."

"But I have," he persisted.

"It is too late to remedy the past. The future is all we

can look to now. Brother, forgive me for speaking plainly. The time is past for evasion of a painful subject. I blame myself that I have not spoken sooner. Are you ready to choose between May Bryce and Chetta Ingledee?"

"Why, sister, I chose long ago."

"Have you always been true to that choice?" He hesitated for a few moments, then said slowly:

"No, I have not. I have been a coward, and hesitated. I deserve only her scorn and contempt."

"Do you still hesitate?"

"No, I decided long ago. Does she doubt me?" he asked, anxiously.

"Does Miss Ingledee know this?" asked Alice, evading his question.

"She knows that there is nothing between myself and her."

"Then go to May, tell her all, beg forgiveness, and make her happy."

"Does she doubt me?" he asked again. "Tell me, Alice. Tell me the worst."

"Tom, you have been indeed blind; she is dying for you. It is only in these few days I have been seriously alarmed. I fear we are all to blame." He broke out into another storm of self-reproaches, but Alice calmed him till he was in a rational mood.

"You must not excite her, Tom."

Just then May entered, having returned from her visit to Dr. Barnet. Tom was shocked at the change in her during the very few days since he had seen her. The wasted features and languid step sent a chill of terror through him.

"May," he said, simply, "I have come to ask forgiveness. I have been very thoughtless, very cruel. If you despise me for it, say so. I deserve it all." Her breath came quick. She tottered and would have fallen had he not caught her in his arms. Alice had disappeared. He looked fondly into those clear blue eyes as she murmured:

"Tom, do you love me still?"

"Yes, darling, and only you."

The color came to her cheeks and the old light of love into her eye. Tom Norwell thought his Prairie Blossom had never looked so beautiful. He used the old epithet of endearment.

"Little Prairie Blossom, how could I be so unkind?"

She smiled the old winning, trusting smile of the days before doubt had poisoned love, and answered gently:

"Don't speak of it, dear. I'm very happy now."

But his mind was still filled with a great, terrible fear. Carefully he approached the subject of her health to relieve his anxiety. She laughed away his fears for the time.

"I have not felt so strong," she said, "as I used to in the country. But I am better now. I shall get along very well, I think." Then hope grew strong in him again.

CHAPTER LI.

FACE TO FACE.—LOVE'S APPEAL TO LOVE.—MR. QUILL MALLEY EXHIBITS ALARMING SYMPTOMS.

On the next day Norwell and Wilson went to the office earlier than usual. The latter had learned through his wife the cause of his partner's strange conduct on the previous day. Now that Norwell was again himself, Wilson had informed him of the dangerous condition of their affairs in the case of a crisis. Toward the close of the day before, many stocks had tumbled rapidly, and People's Telegraph was in particular literally slaughtered. Wilson had relied on Ophir to hold up the market on the latter stock, but that gentleman was either unable or unwilling to do so, or wished it to go lower, no one, excepting Mr. Ophir himself, could tell exactly which.

That day the markets opened with a downward tendency and things began to look very bad for the firm of Norwell & Wilson, whose liabilities unfortunately were heavy and largely matured, while their assets in the shape of a vault full of securities were melting away with fearful rapidity as values declined. The street was wild with excitement. Small dealers were going to the wall. Heavy institutions were taking every possible precaution. The firm of Norwell & Wilson might by throwing their securities on a declining market realize enough ready money to save themselves from bankruptcy, but the sacrifice would be enormous. Somebody was plainly "milking the street."

In his extremity, Norwell determined to appeal once

"Do you wish anything dear?

"Kiss me, papa."

Tears rained down the cheeks of this iron-willed man as he thought of his child that had spent her life scarcely knowing a parent's love. He suddenly remembered that he had not kissed her since she was a child He kissed her tenderly and burst out:

"Oh, my child, my precious child."

She had closed her eyes and did not appear to hear him. In the last moments before eternity was about to claim his child, this wordly-minded, money-worshiping man saw in the twinkling of an eye that there are things which all the millions in the world can not buy. A kiss on the lips of the dying, outweighed his threescore millions.

She turned her eyes to Norwell with a look of ineffable peace. Her eyes met his for an instant. Then they sought her father's face as he leaned over her in an agony of apprehension. There was a twitching of the fingers, a movement of the limbs, a feeble attempt at catching the breath, and Chetta Ingledee was dead.

The physician came too late. It was the undertaker who was to perform his office now. Roker assisted Mr. Ingledee into a carriage. Tom Norwell walked out alone, needing assistance much more than the bereaved father. The blackness of death and disaster had suddenly overspread the entire sky of his life. His oldest, best friend had died to save him. The events of the last two days, so full of dire calamity, had culminated in an awful tragedy, and the end was not yet. He was no longer able to reason his way into any safe haven of refuge. He could only imagine still worse things, for there was *one* thing that might be worse than all that had happened. In his overwrought condition there seemed to be no way out of these dark, uncertain dangers. Life he thought could never again be so sweet for him. The elasticity of mind which in his youth had continually sprang over all obstacles, was now lost. Instead was only a funeral pall of despair that barred from his mind every pleasant thought. One avenue to a region where there was still sunshine lay open. One star of hope still shone above the angry waters. *There* was light and life, but still the sad remembrances of the past must cling round the peaceful abode to which this one small star might lead him—the home which he should share with his crushed but still beautiful Prairie

Flower. With her he would give up this struggle for wealth and live in humble content made wiser by the awful lessons of the past. Then a spectral shape rose between him and this haven of peace, and sick at heart, he strove not to think at all. It was best to have surcease of thought and let events take their own way, since their course could not be changed by much thinking.

As soon as he had collected his thoughts a little, Norwell determined to go home at once and break the news to Alice. He dreaded the effect it might have on May. He would leave all to his sister. He suddenly longed for her strong womanly sympathy and advice, which would do so much toward putting his own disordered thoughts to rights. He called a hack and ordered the man to drive at once to Wilson's house. Alice, anxiously expecting news, met him at the door. The startling intelligence was told in a few words. She listened in silence, remarking only at the close:

"That is awful, Tom."

"Can you tell May without exciting her?'

"I'll try."

"How do you think she will take it?"

Alice looked him in the face for a moment. But his countenance did not suggest the thought she feared.

"I'll try to tell it so she will not be shocked. She will be very sorry. It is a dreadful thing."

May heard the news calmly and with pity for the sad fate of this young woman to whom life must have been so sweet and for whom it might have had so many delights in store. She thought of their last interview, and of the kindness shown her by her former rival. The past was all forgotten in a moment, and only tender memories of the dead remained.

At dinner no allusion was made to the tragedy of the day. Tom explained to the women Wilson's errand to Philadelphia. Mrs. Wilson, who had unbounded confidence in her husband's judgment, at once took hope. Her cheerful confidence gradually aroused Tom. May, who knew absolutely nothing of business, thought things as good as settled already, and was content. The gloom gradually lifted around Tom until he began to see light before him. It was not the sunlight of youth, for that could never return again with the spring birds and the flowers. But it showed him still the same peaceful retreat with the figure of a fair-

haired woman, and peace. He began to see clearly the events of the day and to catch a part of his sister's hope for the future.

With returning calmness of mind he began to study more closely the slight form opposite him, as her blue eyes dwelt on him and she listened eagerly to his words. He was pained to see how fragile she looked. The slender figure appeared almost as delicate as some of those dainty productions in glass, that the slightest blow might ruin forever. Her cheek was wasted and pallid, excepting a faint hectic spot. The brightness of the eye and the cheerful manner he had once before taken for indications of returning health. Now he could not bear to look at those signs which bore such deep deception. Again the shadowy specter rose between him and that quiet land of sunshine. It hid the light of the one star that had shone for him above the black and angry waters. This suspense was unbearable. He determined to end it, although he shrank from the possibilities involved in an interview with Dr. Barnet. He told Alice he thought of going out for an hour or so. He might drop in at the club. He needed to mingle with men and divert his mind. She approved of his purpose, but added a wish that he might get in early. They would wait for him. He took his sister's hand at parting:

"Alice, if I have ever been unkind to you, forgive me. You are a brave, true, good sister. Your presence is sunshine itself." She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Why, Tom, what else should a sister be?" He kissed her again and said, "Good-night." May went with him to the door, for every moment of his presence was joy to her.

"Tom, I know things must come out all right. I think you are not quite happy. Do you really care so much for money?"

"God bless you, little girl," he cried, clasping her to his bosom, "I care nothing for money now. You are all the world to me." She nestled close to his bosom and murmured:

"Tom, I've been very foolish. I wronged you when I doubted you; forgive me. I never was so happy as I am now." She had thought again of that ill-omened note and her active conscientiousness would not rest till this confession was made. He heard it all, then answered gently:

"May, I have been weak and wicked. It was all because I was too cowardly to face duty and do right when it was disagreeable. Let us bury this painful subject forever." The lovers in this moment of mutual confession and condoning were supremely happy. The perfect confidence that marks perfect love had been attained. There could be no more doubts. For a moment Norwell saw things as never before. The triumphs of love and duty were worth more than all the victories ever achieved in Wall Street since Wall Street began. But this vision of Eden was momentary. Again the shadowy specter flitted between him and the distant land of sunshine, which for an instant seemed very near. Snatching a hasty kiss, he said, "Good-night," and was gone.

The news of the tragedy in Mr. Ingledee's office had spread with the rapidity which only the magic of electricity can produce. The papers issued extras with startling headlines. Excited crowds scanned the bulletin boards and blockaded the sidewalks. Men sympathized with the bereaved father whom they had cursed an hour before. The community was inexpressibly shocked that the arm of vengeance had falled on a defenceless, innocent woman.

Pipe Malley was standing in the door of his store when a boy came running breathlessly, crying, "All 'bout the rite'n murder." Pipe bought a paper, and eagerly looking at the display lines, dropped it in surprise and in a tone of anguish exclaimed:

"Quill, she's dead!"

"Who's dead, Pipe?"

"Why her, Miss Ingledee." Quill's only response to this terrible news was to drop a package he was tying up and spill its contents on the floor. He stood staring at Pipe as if waiting for further information. But Pipe could only repeat:

"Ain't it awful, Quill?"

After the first surprise Quill at once thought of how he had betrayed his dead benefactress, and for the first time in his life knew what remorse was. At last he ventured to ask Pipe who sat behind the desk, saying nothing:

"What ailded her, Pipe?"

"What ailed her! why she was killed in the office. Murdered! Don't you know? It's there in the paper." As Quill had not seen the paper he could not well be expected to know.

"I believe it's a lie. Nobody had a grudge agin her unless"—here Quill stopped short—"Durn him, I'd like to choke him to death," he added viciously, as he slammed a weight down on the counter.

"Oh *you!* You're green as grass, Quill. Nobody did it for a grudge. The fellow just shot out of the crowd expecting to kill her father, and killed her. That's all there was to it. She was the best friend I ever had."

"An' we never behaved half decent like we might a' done in class."

"No we didn't," replied Pipe with solemn emphasis.

At supper-time Quill's appetite was completely gone, to Mrs. Malley's alarm. She was unable to see how the death of this dearly beloved teacher should take away appetite. She herself had eaten three square meals the day Mr. Malley departed this life, for grief. In her philosophy she saw no reason, and she was right, for ignoring the wants of the body because of the sorrow of the mind. When she saw Pipe eat a hearty meal she was fully confirmed in her view that some malady had fastened on her precious Quill. While Mrs. Malley openly admired Pipe as the smartest of the two boys, she surreptitiously spoiled and abetted Quill's shortcomings behind Pipe's back. She loved this careless, easy-going boy because he was the inferior of the other, and because she thought Pipe was sometimes too hard on him. He needed her love and sympathy and she gave it freely.

"Quill, honey, are you sick?"

"No," was the rather mournful answer.

"But yer eatin' nothin'."

"He ate enough at dinner for three meals," replied Pipe.

"I didn't either. I jist ain't hungry, that's all."

As this was the first time in Quill's life that he had not been hungry at meal time, Mrs. Malley quietly called him aside after supper to diagnose his symptoms. Finally under promise that she must not tell Pipe, Quill related to his mother the circumstances of his carrying the note, allowing Roker to see it, and finally delivering it to the wrong person.

"Do you think she'll bring it up agin me, mother?" It was difficult to see how the dead woman could bring anything up against any one now; but Quill's conscience was very tender as he reflected on what he had done. He accused himself bitterly to his mother.

"Mother, I jist feel so mean I can't bear to think of it. I hain't fit to live, that's what I hain't." Into his humble life had come a kind friend; across his pathway lay golden opportunities. He had betrayed that friend and despised the opportunities. He hated himself for it.

"Quill, you've been a bad boy. Are you really sorry?"

"Awful sorry, mother."

"Then I don't think she will bring it up agin you." Quill felt relieved to think that his mother looked on the transaction as one that could be forgiven. Mentally he fairly groveled in the dust of penitence while his indignation steadily grew against Horace Roker who had led him to commit this sin of blackest ingratitude.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE SHADOW THAT WALKED BEFORE.

Norwell went directly to Dr. Barnet's office and found the doctor in. He began at once, for this suspense was unbearable. Be the Doctor's opinion what it might it was better to know all than endure such uncertainty. Dr. Barnet as usual began with generalities. Tom stopped him short.

"Doctor, I want to know the facts in this case. I must know them."

"Then you are a near friend of the young lady?"

"She is my affianced bride."

"Her case is very serious. You may as well accustom yourself to consider it dangerous."

The doctor paused. He was loth to pronounce the death doom of the hopes of this young man before him. He knew nothing of the magnitude of that mountain of calamity that three or four days had heaped on Norwell's shoulders.

"Go on, Doctor. I am prepared for the worst. Is there no hope?"

"None whatever. Miss Bryce is in an advanced stage of consumption."

Norwell was very calm. He made no exclamations. He listened as the prisoner at the bar listens while the judge pronounces the sentence of death.

"Can nothing be done, Doctor? Would a change of climate—would California do her any good?"

"Too late," said Dr. Barnet, as he shook his head sadly. "Six months ago or even three months ago it might have saved her, but the work is done now."

"How long do you think she may live?"

"But a few months, perhaps six, may be not so many weeks."

Norwell left the office heedless of the direction he took. He walked like a somnambulist who is not conscious of time, place, or action. But his brain was exceedingly busy. The past rose before him in rapid review. He thought of the first time he had met May and of that first stolen kiss on the bridge. He thought of Chetta Ingledee's life of devotion to him and of the last look of love in her dying eyes which smote him with reproaches. He had slighted one woman who had died to save him and had been false to another who was soon to follow her to the grave, all for love of him. In his agony he cried out, "My God, what have I done!" Again that shadowy phantom crossed his path shutting out the rays of the one benignant star whose light he had followed. This time it was nearer and more distinct. He saw it now without fear. Life for him had no charms, death no terrors. He thought of Wilson's errand for help and of its possible outcome, with the indifference of one in no way interested. The one great trouble of threatened ruin no longer gave him any uneasiness. It was only the inconvenience of a trifling episode, the petty annoyance of a day now laid aside. He walked on sometimes in busy streets, sometimes in deserted streets, not knowing the difference between them. Now and then amid the human forms he caught the outline of that spectral shadow that each time seemed a little nearer and clearer. He looked on it calmly, almost curiously. He turned into Broadway, which at this time of night was nearly deserted. The great thoroughfare which he had traversed thousands of times seemed to recall him partially to a sense of his condition. The familiar landmarks reminded him that business and joy and hope and love were not for him. He had done with them all, and dismissed them. But the faces that he had often seen on that street would not be dismissed. Again he saw the love look in Chetta's dying eyes and almost instantly May Bryce's sweet pale face, with its saddened expression. With a moan he plunged into a less known side street. Better darkness

and that grim threatening shadow, than such awful memories. He walked for hours, not realizing the flight of time. At last he was roused to the consciousness that he had left his sister and sweetheart at home awaiting his return.

The two women at home sat in silence, waiting for the return of the lover and brother. Neither referred to the dreadful event of the day, though the thoughts of both had been busy. Alice took a book, and May sat thinking, till the silvery tones of the clock indicated the hour of ten.

"It is getting late, Alice. Why doesn't he come?"

"It isn't late yet, May. Tom often stays out till after eleven."

"But he promised to come back early, and we were to wait, you know."

"He has met some friends, doubtless. It will do him good to talk to them."

Alice laid aside her book, and the two women drawing nearer together, talked confidentially of old times. Lately, for some reason May delighted to tell of her childhood home in the beautiful prairies of Illinois. She loved to dwell on the little incidents of farm-life. There was a certain old gnarled apple-tree in the orchard at home, where the great branches formed a swinging seat. Here she had often sat when a girl, with a favorite book which she read betimes, while the pinkish-white petals of the fragrant blossoms showered over her golden hair, and innumerable bees hummed busily and darted honey-laden away. The robin, alarmed at this fair intruder on his peculiar domain, with much fretful ado quirked and complained as he flitted from tree to tree in the vicinity. Here she sometimes sat in late summer, and looked off over the rolling prairies at the waving cornfields, shady groves, and dotted farmhouses. Here away to the southwest she could see the lines of the fleecy "thunderheads" pile slowly one on top of another, while she peopled them with a fairy world, the product of her own prolific imagination. Here she was startled from her day-dreams by the sudden swoop of the red-headed woodpecker, who had a mind to banquet on the tempting crimson-cheeked apples, but in his turn was startled at the unexpected vision in the old tree, and flew away with a waving flight to the highest point of the barn-roof, or the dead branches of some neighboring tall tree. Then he waited, while perhaps his mate in the distance pecked a rapid succession of smart blows on a dry rail or tree

"Mr. Wright, I can't give you any money. I can give you your stocks and you can go out and sell them. But you can not get much for them. I think you had better wait."

"Why didn't you tell me this afore, Mr. Norwell, as a friend of Little Hackett's? You knowed I couldn't afford to lose the money. Haven't you any feelings for a poor man?"

"I told you I could sell your venture at a profit. You chose not to sell. I said it might go higher, that I thought it would go higher, but I made no guarantee."

During this time Wilson and one of the clerks had succeeded in getting everybody out of the office excepting Pipe Malley and Wright. The latter was in a perfect frenzy at losing his money, and would listen to no arguments.

"I don't want to do anything desprit, but I must have that money. I tell you it'll kill Sarah. Do you want to murder my family, do you? I might as well do something desprit an' be hung, an' then when Sarah an' me are gone the children can go to the poorhouse. Are you trying to cheat a poor man?"

Pipe Malley had listened for some time with impatience. He could no longer restrain his indignation. Walking between Norwell and Wright he turned on the latter.

"See here, Mr. Wright, you are acting like a madman. You're out o' your head. Go home till you come to yourself before you go talking to people."

"I'll go when I get my money."

"*Your money!* What's *your* money more than other people's money? Haven't others lost all they had? If you don't want to risk any consequences, don't you take any chances. I've been in that mill, too. Now when you get out you'll know enough to stay out."

"I don't want to be beat."

"Who's trying to beat you? You've stood here an' abused Mr. Norwell till it's a shame. I tell you there isn't an honester man in New York than Tom Norwell. Now don't say another word agin him, for I won't stand it if he does."

Tom Norwell, utterly worn out and overwhelmed by the disasters of the day, had sat quiet during the dialogue between Malley and Wright. Thinking his friend's zeal might have led him too far, he quietly said, "Pipe, be careful. There is no need of any further excitement."

"I'm not excited, Mr. Norwell. I only say that this man

has said too much, an' he'd better go home till he comes to his senses. And what's more, I'll not stand his abusing you."

Wilson and Malley finally got Wright aside and induced him to leave and wait till next day. The firm hoped to be open for business again as usual. With reviving hope the man finally saw the absurdity of his actions and regretted his course.

"Mr. Norwell," he said, "I guess I was a little too fast. But I was thinkin' of Sarah an' the children. I'm a plain man an' don't know how to talk polite like you do. If I said anything out of the way I hope you won't consider it as amountin' to much."

"We will let that pass," said Tom. Pipe left at the same time, but when Wilson showed him out he met Amaziah Snicker at the side entrance. Snicker came to make inquiries about some business matters in which he was indirectly interested.

"What is the prospect, Wilson?"

"Very dark. We hope to resume to-morrow."

"It's terrible," said Snicker, wiping his face as he entered the private office. "I never saw the like. I didn't sleep a wink last night. I'm out a cool hundred thousand."

"It is a very dark outlook for us," said Norwell, "but I supposed that you had no investments that were likely to be affected by a temporary fluctuation."

"Did it against my better judgment, to please Fred and some friends. I've been in hot water for three days. I can't sit still, or eat or sleep. It reminds me of the time I scooped a million out o' sugar in '61. Damn me, why did I ever scoop a million out o' sugar to go dabbling in railroad stocks!" A vicious stamp of the foot accompanied this sentiment. "A clean hundred thousand gone. Damn speculation, I say." Mr. Snicker vanished with this objurgation on the very means that had put the Snicker family into society, and above everything common, except, perhaps, the very common habit of getting out of temper and indulging a latitude often taken on, such occasions by high and low, rich and poor, the habit of swearing. The partners were left alone in Norwell's private office.

"Wilson, I'd rather be dead than undergo all this."

"It's a hard place to be in, that's a fact; but the main thing now is to get out."

"Arthur, I am sorry I ever advised you to go into business. Ruin will be the result."

"Tom, this is no time for that sort of talk. I took the responsibility on my own shoulders when I agreed to put my money into business."

"Everything I do seems to be unlucky."

Wilson for the first time now noticed the worn, haggard look in the face of his partner. Under the tremendous pressure of the last few days Norwell looked several years older. Wilson, who knew as yet little of the secret trouble weighing on Tom's heart, supposed all this anxiety was caused by the disaster that had overtaken the business. He said kindly, but firmly:

"Norwell, positively you must not give way to these morbid feelings now, or think about what might have been. We need all our energies to save ourselves. Listen. I have one plan yet. George Mack, my old partner in the Amazon, lives in Philadelphia. If he can raise one hundred thousand dollars in cash, we can pull through, I think, for the bottom has been reached beyond doubt. I shall take a train for Philadelphia at once. You say to Alice that I shall not be home to-night, and, by the way, you had better stay there yourself."

"That is a good idea, Arthur. Meantime I will go over and see Ingledee and find out, if I can, what the outlook is for to-morrow."

"I have no confidence in Ingledee, but as you are an old friend of his, it can't do any harm to see him."

Norwell got his hat at once and prepared to start, while Wilson made a few hasty preparations for his journey. A train left Jersey City in twenty minutes, and he had just enough time to catch it.

"Arthur, I have not felt like myself for a day or two. The pressure has been more than I can stand. I'm glad you are equal to it."

"Tom, I'll pull the firm through if it is possible. I know Mack will help me if he can. Put things in as bright a light as you can to Alice and Miss Bryce."

"I'll do it. Good-bye, Arthur; success to you."

"Good-bye, Tom. I'll telegraph as soon as I learn anything definite."

Tom still held his partner's hand. For some reason, some mysterious impulse, he clung to it and gave it a lingering

pressure, as if he could not bear to let it go. Again he repeated, "Good-bye, Arthur." Again Wilson said good-bye and gently drew his hand away from Tom's, a little surprised at the yearning look in his brother's eyes. With faint hope Tom cried out after the figure retreating through the doorway outside, "Good luck." A tear stole silently down his cheek. This strong, active, once buoyant spirit was slowly breaking under a pressure that few men could bear.

Norwell put on his hat and walked down the street to Ingledee's office. The drizzling rain and fog had deepened at half-past three in the afternoon, almost into the darkness of night. Gas burned everywhere, shining dimly through the mist with a faint aureole. The mob had diminished, but still watched sullenly in force before the windows of the great magnates of the street. The same muttered threats of violence were occasionally heard. There was a rumor that Ophir had entered Ingledee's office, and that the two railway kings were now closeted together. But the sullen men who breathed vengeance were a minority, and the mob was not prepared to inaugurate a carnival of bloodshed and destruction. Norwell with little difficulty passed through an adjoining building and reached a back entrance of the building in which Ingledee's spacious offices were situated. A porter who knew Norwell, let him pass readily, and told him that Mr. Ingledee had not yet gone home. Norwell passed to the front and pleading very urgent business, was admitted to the private office. Here were Mr. Ingledee, Chetta and Horace Roker.

Ingledee had not been alarmed by the threats of the mob. He had, contrary to Roker's advice, remained in the office all day watching the market. The excitement of the occasion was to him only child's play which he greatly enjoyed. Entrenched behind his impregnable millions, he sat and placidly watched the drowning wretches who had been suddenly overtaken by this monetary deluge. He smiled as he raked in the thousands that would have saved others, and for want of which they must perish. He laughed at Roker's hints that there might be danger in remaining. Henry Ingledee never deserted his post because of danger. Chetta, who had come down early in the day, absolutely refused to leave her father, in spite of his commands. For once she peremptorily refused to obey him.

Norwell told Mr. Ingledee that things were very threat-

ening outside, and that the mob refused to disperse, though business hours were now past. He mentioned the threats to burn the building.

"Let them try it, curse them!" exclaimed Ingledee. "It will be the worst piece of work they ever did."

"Oh do go, papa; we can do nothing here now, any way."

Just then a heavy stone was thrown with great force striking the plate glass window and shivering it into long, jagged triangles, some of which broke off and fell to the ground, while others stood in place. This was followed by a hooting and yelling of the mob.

"The villains!" exclaimed Mr. Ingledee as he rushed to the window defiantly.

"Papa, you *must* go. Quick, or it may be too late." She clung to him and placed herself between him and the window.

"Yes, it is time for us all to go," said Norwell. "Miss Ingledee, this is no place for you." He took her arm to lead her away, while Roker stood calmly in the rear waiting the orders of his chief.

"I can't go Mr. Norwell, till papa and you are safe. Please be quick. I will wait here till you escape. They will suspect nothing while they see me here, and they will not hurt a woman."

"We will all go," said Mr. Ingledee decisively. "I think the beggars mean mischief. Daughter, run to the back door and wait for us. I will get my hat and cane. They can't start me in a panic if they do their worst. Go Chetta."

"Papa, if we all go at once they will discover us and you may not escape. You gentlemen must go first; while I remain they will not suspect that you are gone. They are not such cowards as to attack a woman when they discover their mistake."

Another stone shattered more of the glass and accelerated Mr. Ingledee's movements toward a little closet where his hat and stick were. Chetta moved nearer the window and Norwell stepped forward to lead her away. Some one in the crowd, doubtless thinking his figure that showed conspicuous in the gaslight was that of Ingledee, suddenly fired a shot, the first one that had been heard. It was followed by a woman's scream, and two or three more shots in quick succession. Chetta Ingledee clasped her side convulsively, stood

still for a moment, then fell heavily into Norwell's arms as he caught her, horror stricken at the suddenness of the terrible deed. The fatal bullet had entered the region of the stomach and torn its way through the vital organs. Roker uttered a cry of horror which caused Mr. Ingledee to turn in time, to see his daughter fall, limp and helpless, into Norwell's arms. He rushed to her side, asking frantically:

"Are you hurt, darling? Speak to me. What is it, my child?"

She looked up into Norwell's face, while a smile played over the features from which the blood had already fled. Then she spoke faintly and gasping:

"Tom, don't let me fall. I'm so dizzy. Papa, save yourself."

"Roker, go for a physician, quick—quick!" said Mr. Ingledee.

The agonized father hastily tore open the clothing of his dying child, as she lay on the floor, her head supported on Norwell's knee. The beautiful skin, as white as marble, showed one small spot hardly as large as a cherry with a dark, blood-colored, narrow ring around its edge. Not a drop of blood issued from the wound. "Chetta, speak to me; are you badly hurt?" She opened her eyes and said faintly:

"Papa, are you safe?"

"Yes, daughter, I think the danger is over. Are you much hurt, Chetta?"

"Papa, I am dying."

A moan from the stricken parent was the only answer. There was a brief pause. No more shots had been fired and a platoon of police were now clearing the streets. The dying woman breathed very hard. The diaphragm had been torn and disabled by the shot. Neither of the men uttered a single word during this minute of intense suspense. "Please raise my head," she murmured very faintly. Norwell drew her head and shoulders into a more comfortable position, resting them against his body as he kneeled on the floor. The woman who had loved him all her life was now dying in his arms. Soon there was a convulsive struggle for a brief moment, and the face was distorted by a spasm of intense pain. Then a peaceful expression passed over the bloodless features of the woman.

"Papa," she said in a low tone, "I am going." Then she looked at him with an expression of intense wistfulness. He stooped down and tenderly inquired:

a vaunt be a matter of self-congratulation, that she never sleeps. Her vigil is eternal. It plants the seeds of death, for it is said that ten thousand more people die every year in New York than are born there. This great waste is made up from the country, where men's nerves are steadied by the balm of perfect sleep, the only elixir of life.

The tide of restless humanity had ebbed to its lowest point, and stood still for a moment before the re-awakening. These women waiting for a loved one had seen it decline, and their hopes slowly sank with it, till the depths of despair were reached, in mutual silence. Neither dared speak her thoughts to the other, though each one knew the other's thoughts. A noise in a neighboring business street aroused them. A baker's wagon rattled over the stony pavements on its route supplying restaurants which were obliged to open early. The day had begun, but not the dawn. In a low tone Alice broke the silence:

"It will soon be morning."

"Hark! what is that?" asked May, whose sensitive ear caught the slightest sound. The quick step of a man was heard outside. His figure could be dimly seen in the dull light from a street lamp at the corner. He ascended the steps, and paused to read the name on the door-plate. The hearts of the women stood still in dread expectation. It was not the one they looked for; he would unlock the door, and enter. Then the door-bell rang violently, startling the women as its echoes sounded through the silent house. Neither spoke, but both felt that something had happened. Instantly Mrs. Wilson was at the door. Putting on the guard-chain, she cautiously opened the door a few inches.

"Does Mr. Wilson live here?"

"Yes; what is wanted?"

"Do you know a Mr. Norwell?"

"Yes; he is my brother. Something has happened?"

"An accident in the street, ma'am. The gentleman was run down by a carriage that turned the corner on him too quick. He was brought home to 19 Amsterdam Place insensible. They found this address on some papers in his pocket."

"I will go to him at once. Will you be kind enough to go to the stables around on the next street, and order a hack instantly?"

"Certainly, Ma'am," said the man, then, after hesitating, he added: "Don't be alarmed too much, ma'am, but he is very badly injured."

The man knew there was little hope, and the anxious women arrived only to find the loved one unconscious from a ghastly wound in the head where it had struck the sharp curbstone. May entered first, and stood for a moment like one suddenly struck by a mortal shaft, then threw herself upon the motionless form and burst into a passionate grief. One by one the strangers silently stole from the room, and the anxious sister and stricken sweetheart were left alone with their dear one in the solemn gray twilight of the early morning.

CHAPTER LIV.

A FADING FLOWER.

The angel of death has been busy with the characters of this history, and sorrow has sometimes entered where joy might have been expected. But this book has not been written to depict all things as pleasant, and cater to any idle desire for mere amusement. In the estimation of the writer, life is far too serious, its work-day needs too pressing, its leisure too small, its duties too great, its pathos too real for any one to spend weary months of hard labor and precious time, that dearest of all things sold from nature's store, to produce a book for mere amusement; or for any one to read such a book simply because it is a story, and may perhaps tickle with some odd conceit the already surfeited palate of the reading public.

This narration is sometimes sad, because life is very often sad. Mirth is a medicine, and habitual sadness is not good for man. But sorrow is the crucible that refines character till the pure gold far outshines the meretricious glitter of fool's gold. It is better to weep sometimes with Niobe, than to grin forever with Comus. It is best to know, once for all, and never forget, that certain lines of conduct can only lead to suffering, and that others will lead to happiness, come what may. It is well to know that money in itself is not happiness; that the man who in this life seeks only money, who toils for it by day, dreams of it by night, and perhaps acts dishonestly to get it, is laying up for himself only dis-

appointment for old age, and, if he be not utterly lost to the finer feelings of human nature, remorse for his death-bed and despair for his soul.

It is well to keep it forever before our eyes, that we can not remedy evils by ignoring them. All that the tyrant, the extortioner, the evil-doer asks is to be let alone. We can not shirk our duties as citizens on the plea: These things do not trouble me; my family and my interests are safe. The public weal is the first duty of every citizen. When this principle is forgotten in a selfish and disgraceful scramble for office, spoils, and emoluments, democratic government has witnessed the beginning of the end.

Finally, it is well for us to remember that we can not, if we would, escape the consequences of our own acts; and that, though we may manfully face these consequences for ourselves, we may bring sorrow to other hearts, and ruin to other firesides, while we are powerless to avert the blow.

* * * * * *

A few months have elapsed since the sad events recorded in the last chapter. The scene is a cottage in New Jersey. People move quietly within and speak in subdued tones. A fair young woman lies at the point of death. The sweet Prairie Flower has slowly drooped day by day, while fond parents and kind friends watch at her bedside. It is again spring time. The warm south wind enters at the open window, while the sun shines brightly on the trees outside where the happy birds sing. May Bryce is no longer able to sit by the window and watch the birds build; but her bed is brought near, and she can hear them. Her mother sits by the bedside, and watches with breaking heart, the wasted features of her once beautiful child.

On that face there is only sweet peace and perfect happiness. She knows that she is going to die. There are no more fears, no more doubts, no more longings. It is only a step from this world of sorrow to that land of joy, where every wish shall be pure, and every sense be gratified. She asks her stricken father and mother not to weep for her. Death is only laying off an old garment for a new one that is beautiful and perfect. But the eyes of those weeping parents can not see beyond the river to that region of delight on which their daughter looks with perfect resignation.

Their tired feet still tread this earth, and their weary hearts can not yet give up the things of this life.

"Mother, do not grieve, it is only for a little while. We shall all meet soon."

"Yes, child; but we shall be very lonely in the old house at home."

"But you will think of me, and then you will know that I am still near you. How I should like to see the old home again. What day of the month is it, mother?"

"It is the twentieth day of May."

"The apple trees are now in full bloom, and the flowers are thick on the prairies. I think it would do me good to smell them again."

"Shall I give you this bouquet that Miss Hackett brought you?"

"No," said the sick girl wearily, motioning the flowers away; "it was very kind of Mary, but it doesn't smell like the flowers at home. I miss the apple blossoms."

"Mr. Wilson will get you some, May."

"No, it isn't worth while, mother. They wouldn't be just like our apple blossoms." She paused awhile, and gasped for breath—she was very weak now.

"Father!" she called faintly.

"Yes, May; I am here," and the stricken man took his seat by the bedside.

"I've been thinking about our old home."

"Have you, child? Well, it's a pleasant place to think about."

"I did wish I could die there, but that is over now." His tears were falling fast, but he dared not trust his voice to say a word. He feared to distress her by breaking down completely.

"Do you think the boys and girls will think of me sometimes?"

"They surely will."

"Please say I often thought of them. Give my old teacher, Mr. Hickson, some of my books. He would like them."

"It shall be done, daughter." Then she went on with various little bequests to her former young friends and schoolmates. She spoke with a childish simplicity, and in all things seemed more and more a child.

At last she spoke with sudden eagerness:

"Father, please don't sell my pony. Poor Dick! I know he will miss me."

"I will keep him always," said the father, in a choking voice.

"May, are you not tired? Perhaps you are talking too much at one time," gently suggested the mother. She closed her eyes as if thinking, and lay very still for a few minutes. A sense of drowsiness prevailed in the room as the afternoon sun made the air warm. The birds still flitted in the trees but their motions were more languid. A bottlefly that had got inside suddenly buzzed up against the window pane in his efforts to escape. The noise caused the sick girl to open her eyes. "Father," she said in a very low voice.

"What is it, my child?"

"I wish to ask one more favor before I die. You will not refuse me?" He knew what she wanted and nodded, his head for her to go on.

When Mr. Bryce on his arrival in New York had learned all the terrible details of this tragedy of his daughter's life, his anger had flamed hot against Tom Norwell. But seeing the distress that it gave May he had never said anything on the subject after the first outburst of passionate grief. Mrs. Bryce had made her peace with May on that subject and the dying girl now longed for the same words of forgiveness from the father. Tom Norwell had lain for weary weeks at the point of death, not caring to live. When the Wilsons had moved from their fine New York home to a modest residence in a suburban town of New Jersey he had been able, for the first time, to leave his room. Now a saddened, broken man he came daily to speak a few words with his dying loved one. Mr. Bryce had quietly but persistently refused a reconciliation. He was ready now to grant his child anything.

"Have you forgiven him? For my sake, father, please."

"Yes, darling, I have forgiven him."

"And you will not grieve too much for me, will you?"

"Oh, May! May! My child, my poor child. My heart is broken." In spite of himself the gray-haired man burst into a fit of sobbing. For a moment a look of pain was on her worn features, but it soon passed and as his tears ceased to flow, her old happy look returned, the sunny look of her girlhood.

"It is only for a little while, father, and then we shall all meet, to be very happy."

She lay in a seeming reverie for a few minutes, and on rousing herself, the bright eyes which were sunk deeply in the wasted sockets looked around the room. Several times this was repeated.

"Do you wish anything, May?" asked the mother.

"Has he come yet?"

Mrs. Bryce walked into the little sitting room and met Norwell, who had just arrived. Whispering a few words in his ear she led him into the sick room. The two men shook hands without uttering a word, though tears trickled down the cheeks of each. Then Tom took the hand of the sick girl.

"Can you ever forgive me, May?"

"Oh Tom, that is all past. I can die happy now."

"I can never forgive myself," he answered with choking sobs."

"Please do not say that; for my sake will you try to forget all? For my sake?"

"Yes May, I will try."

She smiled serenely, and was finally at peace. After a few minutes of silence she fell again into the old condition of reverie that was half sleep. Again there was a wish expressed in her countenance.

"What is it, dear?"

"Alice and Mr. Wilson," was the faint response.

"Shall I call them?"

"Yes."

The end was fast approaching. When Mr. and Mrs. Wilson came in, the same loving smile was the only recognition. No word was spoken as the five mourners gathered around the bedside. A half hour passed in silence. The birds no longer were noticed at the window. The sun sank low in the west but no one saw his going. The dying girl lay very still; the look of intelligence slowly faded from her eyes which were fixed vacantly on the wall, unless their attention was diverted by some movement in the room. Then for a moment they returned to the father and mother, only to fall into a vacant, far-off look again.

An effort to speak was in vain. Only the word "Mother" very low, could be distinguished as Mrs. Bryce leaned over her dying child. There was a feeble struggle for breath, then perfect repose of mind and body. The eyes were fixed on the distant wall, and no longer recognized things of earth.

The breath came very feebly and with longer intervals, appeared to cease, then came again so weak as to be almost imperceptible, then ceased forever, and the soul of the Prairie Flower had bloomed again in a land where the flowers never fade and their perfume is eternal.

* * * * * * *

The curiosity felt by mankind touching the affairs of other people will not allow this story to end without a few words of explanation as to the doings of the other characters in the book. Mr. Horace Roker's dream of the future has suffered a terrible awakening. It has passed away forever with her who gave the vision its seductive possibility. Roker felt perhaps as much sorrow at the death of Chetta Ingledee as he was capable of feeling for any one. But his disappointment at seeing his long-cherished hope blighted in an instant was most poignant.

Mr. Ingledee sees more of this than any one else and mistaking Roker as he always has done, gives him credit for possessing a fine feeling. We may only picture in our imagination the proportions of Roker's magnificent plans, for he confided fully in no one. He yet has plans which are left for time to develop. But one man guesses the extent of Roker's ambition, and that man finds him indispensable under the pressure of business cares and the infirmities of growing age. To Henry Ingledee, Roker is now a necessity, and enjoying the unusual advantages of connection with so many millions, that cool, calculating, soulless man is rapidly becoming a power among the money kings of the land. Some day he will doubtless be a great railway king himself, as he possesses all the qualifications for that modern potentate, namely brains and brass in plenty, conscience, none at all.

Mr. Ingledee himself has grown old in appearance. His hair once jet black is now silvery. The lines in his face have deepened. His step has no longer the proud elasticity of a few years ago. He lives alone in the great house surrounded by the evidences of vast wealth which he can not enjoy. The great hope of his life perished with his son. The death of his daughter was only an incident compared with that other crisis. He missed her, he mourned her, but not as he mourned that son in whom all the hopes and ambitions of his life centered. The death of his children has only

hardened the heart of Mr. Ingledee. The temporary gleam of a higher humanity that lighted his soul as he saw his child dying before him, disappeared with her, and now he is the same iron-willed man, grasping feverishly, nay almost anxiously after more gold. This unholy lust of money has burned out of his soul nearly every generous impulse, though he still gives to charity, and sometimes a benefaction to some public institution.

The very latest exploit of Mr. Ingledee and his partners in the way of business is an attempt to grab several million acres of public lands originally granted to a rival road, but which reverted to the people because no road was ever built in conformity with the act granting the lands.

Ophir is still engaged in cornering stocks and skinning lambs in Wall street. The supply of juvenile mutton holds out wonderfully well. Occasionally he gets up a colossal squeeze and "milks" the street. His ways are no less peculiar than of old. Ophir knows better how to enjoy life than Ingledee. He spends much time with his family or in wandering through his vast greenhouses. Lately he has conceived the apparently innocent ambition of securing a specimen of every kind of palm known. But Mr. Ophir is a man who will do to watch; perhaps he is trying to "corner" palms.

From this picture of soulless extortion we turn to a more wholesome example. Pipe Malley, whom we first knew as a poor, ragged, illiterate newsboy has become a useful citizen. By industry, careful economy, and attention to business, he has obtained a good start in the world. He is now a cleanly, well-dressed man. His strength of character has given him an assured ascendancy over his mother and Quill. If he at times draws the reins of family government rather tight it can be said in his defence that such a course is conducive to their common welfare.

Quill is still on salary. His prospects of being a partner are somewhat dubious, for Pipe insists that only strict attention to business will enable any one to earn promotion. Quill is one of the kind who are destined to go through life in a hand-to-mouth way. His speech is not yet regulated strictly by the rules of syntax, and his heels still occasionally essay a breakdown in Pipe's absence and when business is dull. The twins still gratefully remember their old teacher and benefactor, Chetta Ingledee. It may be of interest to the

student of human natare to add that each at times says that Chetta made him what he is.

Mrs. Malley, since her sons have done so well in the world, no longer toils at the washtub but spends her time in housekeeping duties. Mary Hackett still works in the bindery. Aunt Rhoda is getting very old and childish. She seldom goes out. Occasionally Mary takes her to call on their dear friend, Mrs. Wilson. After these visits the old lady is usually inclined to indulge in reflections on the past, and frequently mentions Mr. Tom, and the boy whose grave is under the pines in that far-off mountain land.

Austin Hickley is still in the law, and the Honorable Dave Sawder is still in politics, which is perhaps all that the reader cares to know about him.

The Snicker family is still in the social swim. The Old Commoner is assiduously scooping a million out of sugar, in spite of his daughter's protest that the feat has been performed often enough already. Mr. Fred Snicker is still industriously doing society with his little cane and his wainbow-layered perfumes. Miss Harrie Snicker having failed to capture a live lord or a mining millionaire has received Mr. Bradley again into favor much against the will of paterfamilias. The Gallic tongue has gone out of fashion, and she is again obliged to speak the vernacular for want of a more available medium. Mr. Bradley is more than ever devoted to his great purpose seconded so ably by Miss Harrie, though the labor of his herculean task is beginning to tell on him and his duties begin to wear a perfunctory air.

Arthur Wilson managed to save a competence from the wreck of his affairs. In a quiet little cottage surrounded by vines and shrubbery, in a suburban village, over in New Jersey, live the Wilsons, a very happy pair. As Arthur comes home from his business at six o'clock, he is met by the smiling face of his wife, who holds in her arms a crowing, bright-faced, chubby boy, who is just beginning to say "Papa," a linguistic feat that is usually hailed with intense satisfaction by young parents, but the exact period of whose satisfactory accomplishment is not so well defined to the ear of a disinterested person. Sometimes Mrs. Wilson complains that it is unfair for him always to kiss Baby before he kisses the mother, but there never was a family without its little differences. Wilson is no longer possessed with desire for great wealth. The lessons of experience have sunk deeply, and his constant reflection now is that plenty is enough for any man.

In a secluded valley in the Rocky Mountains by the side of a clear rushing stream stands a solitary cabin. Its tenant is a ranchman who sells his produce in the neighboring mining camps. He lives alone in the simple manner of a mountaineer. His robust frame is slightly bowed though he is still a young man, and his fine face has an expression of habitual thoughtfulness. He has no intimate friends, though a man known far and wide for his hospitality and his habitual kindness alike to stranger or friend. In his bronzed countenance, which is half concealed by heavy whiskers and shaded by a huge sombrero, the observant eye may recognize our old friend Tom Norwell.

NOTES TO AN IRON CROWN.

OPINIONS OF NOTED MEN.

Lest some may think that the author of this work is needlessly alarmed at the dangers to free government threatened in the growing abuses of corporate power, the following utterances of eminent men are given in evidence. They are only a few out of hundreds of similar import which might be adduced.

"I am persuaded that the next great question to be confronted will be that of corporations and their relations to the interests of the people and to national life. The fear is now entertained by many of our best men that the National and State Legislatures of the Union, in creating these vast corporations have evoked a spirit which may escape and defy their control, and which may wield a power greater than Legislatures themselves."

JAS. A. GARFIELD.
House of Representatives, Dec. 16, 1869.

"Complaints have lately been numerous and urgent that certain corporations, controlling in whole or in part the facilities for the interstate carriage of persons and merchandise, over the great railroads of the country, have resorted in their dealings with the public to divers measures unjust and oppressive in their character."

Message of PRESIDENT ARTHUR, Dec. 4, 1883.

"Great corporations and consolidated monopolies are fast seizing the avenues of power that lead to the control of the government. It is an open secret that they rule states through procured legislatures and corrupted courts; that they are strong in Congress; and that they are unscrupulous in the use of means to conquer prejudice and acquire influence. This condition of things is truly alarming, for unless it be changed quickly and thoroughly, free institutions are doomed to be subverted by an oligarchy resting on a basis of money and corporate power."

HON. DAVID DAVIS,
Ex-Associate Justice of U. S. Supreme Court.

"All public men must take their sides on this question. There can be no neutrals. He that is not for us is against us. We must have legal protection against these abuses. This agitation once begun, and the magnitude of the grievance being understood, it will force our rulers to give us a remedy against it. The monopolists will resist with all their arts and influences, but fifty millions of people in process of time will learn that they are fifty millions strong."

HON. J. S. BLACK,
Ex-Attorney General of the United States.

"The channels of thought and the channels of commerce thus owned by one man or a body of men, what is to restrain corporate power or fix a limit to its exactions on the people? What is there to hinder these men from depressing or inflating the value of all kinds of property to suit their caprice or avarice, and thereby gathering into their own coffers the wealth of the nation? What shall be said of the spirit of a free people who will submit without protest to be thus bound, hand and foot?"

HON. WM. WINDOM,
Ex-Secretary of Treasury of U. S.

"In my judgment, the republic can not long live in the atmosphere which now surrounds the ballot box. Moneyed corporations to secure favorable legislation for themselves are taking an active part in elections by furnishing large sums of money to corrupt the voter and purchase special privileges from the government. If money can control the decision of the ballot box, it will not be long till it can control its existence."

Message of GOV. GRAY, *of Indiana.*

In contrast with the above, read the following remarkable utterance of William Walter Phelps, a millionaire Congressman from New Jersey, in his speech on the Reagan Inter-State Commerce Bill, as published in the Congressional Record of Dec. 12, 1884. If he speaks the sentiment of railroad men, their attitude on this question is certainly plain enough. It is an open defiance of the people, and a challenge of their right to make their own laws.

"The railways, if these restrictions should become laws, will ostentatiously break them all. That will challenge public attention, and public attention is redress. Or they will issue an order that the whole railroad system shall obey, that every locomotive from sea to sea shall stay in its roundhouse."

When that edict goes forth, let the people issue another, abrogating the charter of every railroad in the United States.

NOTE I.

THE MUSSEL SLOUGH TRAGEDIES.

"It is not surprising that another tragedy has been added to the dark history of the Mussel Slough country. It is simply another chapter in the old story of the conflict of might against right; of a long succession of deep and deadly injuries ripening in a harvest of blood; of the oppressed striking at the oppressors; of the victims of injustice and cruelty turning, as even a worm will turn, and stinging the feet that trample on them. It has been so in every land under the sun, and will be so long as the world lasts. Traced to its source, the bitter enmities engendered flow from greed and avarice. The conflict is simply one wherein organized wealth has sought to rob the settler of his home for the railroads will pillage the farmer of his house and lands as readily as they rob the merchant and tradesman. Everything is fish which comes to the railroad

sounding the woodpecker's rattle so familiar to the ear in the American forests and fields.

May delighted to dwell on these tender recollections. She had never liked the bustle and turmoil of a great city, and since her health had failed she longed for the old home. With much persuasion Alice had induced May to write to her father and mother that she was not in her usual health. An answer was expected soon. Meantime Alice saw that her sick friend drooped visibly, day by day.

The little clock again interrupted their conversation. With deliberate silvery strokes it pealed out eleven. The last stroke seemed delayed for an instant, as if it dreaded to alarm this patient, suffering creature to whom it must send a pang.

"Alice," asked the young woman in a low tone, "do you think anything has happened him? I am uneasy."

"I think not, dear. Don't be alarmed, you know you are not quite strong yet, and must be as quiet as possible." As Mrs. Wilson said this, she silently drew nearer to the fragile girl, and placed an arm around her waist. In truth, she herself was uneasy. "Tom has met some friends. It is better so."

There were no more tender reminiscences of the old home. There was only anxious watching. Vehicles of all kinds had long since disappeared from the streets, excepting an occasional carriage that rolled homeward, bearing its occupants from some scene of pleasure. Thus runs the world away. One waits in lonely silence for the return of an absent one, or watches patiently by the sick bed, while another goes forth to scenes of pleasure. To-morrow he will sit in mourning, too, while another hastes to the bridal feast.

Occasionally the women went to the window, and peered out into the street where the passers were now very few. At times they started as they felt sure they heard a footfall on the steps of the front door. It was all a fancy, no one came.

The silvery tongue of the clock slowly pealed twelve. Reluctantly it was compelled to measure the flight of time.

"I am sure something has happened," said May in alarm.

"I think not, dear. He must have been delayed, and finding it late, went to his lodgings. We had better retire, and meet him at breakfast."

While Alice said this, a great fear which she was obliged to conceal, possessed her.

"We promised to wait for him. He will not leave us alone to-night."

"But you are not strong, May. Go to bed, and get your rest. You need it. I will sit up for him."

"I could not sleep. I will wait, too."

Mrs. Wilson called a servant, and told him to close the house, and go to bed. She intended to wait for her brother. The man obeyed, and soon all was silent in the house. The night was dark, though the drizzling rain had ceased in the evening. Carriages were heard now only at very rare intervals. Soon the silvery voice of the clock pealed one with a suddenness that alarmed them. It had got through its disagreeable task with marvelous dispatch, compared with its very deliberate work of recording twelve. To end this terrible suspense, Mrs. Wilson now sent a servant to her brother's lodgings to inquire if he had returned. It was but a short distance, and soon the man came back, saying that with much difficulty he had aroused the house, and that Mr. Norwell had not been in that evening.

May's anxiety now caused a violent fit of coughing which sounded dreadfully alarming in the great silent house. Her friend, with a mother's solicitude, administered a remedy, and urged her again to go to bed. The night air was getting chill, and the fire in the grate was out. May persisted in refusal. She could not sleep while the dreadful thought haunted her that something might have happened to him. Alice then threw a shawl about the invalid who sat in an easy chair, and the vigil continued. Now there were no sounds in the streets. The great city slept as nearly as a city may, which never sinks to perfect repose.

Alice had rapidly sunk into a condition of alarm that approached despair, and realizing her brother's great troubles, and the effect that the tragedy of the day must have had on him, she feared that it might unsettle his mind temporarily. She thought of this again and again, and each time with increasing fear of the one terrible event—suicide.

The stillness of the house was oppressive, and had in it something of terror to the two watchers, who drew closely together in sympathy. For a brief space the silence was perfect. But the eye of a million people is never wholly closed. The wants of civilization turn night into day, and universal sleep is unknown. As the British Empire boasts that the sun never sets on her dominions, so a great city may boast, if such

aires some *twenty million paupers*, supposing the remaining wealth distributed as far as it would go at the rate of $1,000 per person. *Of these fortunes twenty average one hundred millions each.*

NOTE VIII.

VENALITY OF LEGISLATORS.

Theodore Roosevelt, in the Century Magazine for April, 1885, estimates that one-third of all the members of our state legislatures are open to bribery in some form or other. He bases this estimate chiefly on his long observation as a member of the Legislature of New York.

NOTE IX.

BOGUS DIVIDENDS.

The men who controlled the Wabash system, some years ago, paid from their own pockets (if the newspaper press is to be credited) dividends which the road had never earned, in order to advance the stock of the company far beyond its real value, and enable them to unload it on an unsuspecting public. The managers of this swindle secured through it many millions of dollars.

NOTE X.

ARBITRARY CHANGES OF RATES.

June 24, 1884—Special class, grain, flour, etc., 20 cents; seventh class and live hogs, 25 cents; eighth class, 25 cents; ninth class, 30 cents. July 21, 1884—Special class, grain, etc., 25 cents; seventh class and live hogs, 30 cents; eighth class, 25 cents; ninth class, 35 cents.

This is an advance of three cents per bushel on wheat. If the railroads could carry grain from Chicago to New York for twenty cents per hundred in June, why could they not do the same in July? Their answer, if they chose to give one, would be a series of evasions and specious reasons existing only in their own minds. The real reason for the advance is, *they know they have the power to get it*, and if pressed for explanations, Mr. Gould, Mr. Vanderbilt or Mr. Huntington would probably reply in the language of Boss Tweed, "What are you going to do about it?"

CHANGES OF RATES IN EUROPE.

In England every railroad company is obliged to place a book of rates in every station. This book must remain open to public inspection. In Prussia six weeks notice must be given before any change of rates goes into effect.

DO RAILROADS EVER LOWER FREIGHT CHARGES VOLUNTARILY?

"The *Bee* (Omaha) vouches for the fact that freight rates in some parts of Nebraska are higher than in 1879. The people of Butler and Polk counties alone could have saved two hundred thousand dollars, if their wheat and corn could have been carried this year (1884) at the same rates as in 1879. In the case of a cattle shipment it mentions, the rate in

Nebraska was $42.85 per car for one hundred miles, while the same shipment was charged, on its way through Iowa and Illinois, but *nine* dollars per car for one hundred miles." —*Chicago Tribune*, Dec., 1884.

NOTE XI.

ARBITRARY POWER OF CORPORATIONS.

"A committee of the United States Senate reported six years ago, that, even at that time, the men who controlled the four great trunk lines between New York and Chicago, could, by a single stroke of the pen, reduce the value of property in this country by hundreds of millions of dollars. * * * No Congress would dare to exercise so vast a power except upon a necessity of the most imperative nature."

—*N. Y. Times*, Dec. 6, 1880.

TAXES ON INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES.

"Every quarter of a cent decline in the price of wheat means a loss in the marketable value of the wheat crop of the country of one million dollars, and within a few days the value of the wheat crop has decreased well on to twenty millions of dollars. But railroad rates remain substantially the same as one year ago, when wheat fetched one dollar per bushel in Chicago, and in many cases, as we have shown, they are higher than they were.

"When the railroads have had good years they have doubled their stock, as the Rock Island did a few years ago; or they have accumulated a surplus, like that of the North Western, which now amounts to thirty millions; or they have stretched half way across the continent, like the Burlington. When there come bad years, like those now upon us, the railroads insist that the poor farmer shall continue to make good all this pile of Wall street fictions. He must go on paying dividends on all the capitalization of all the locomotives, cars, and rails the roads ever had, although a larger part of them have since been worn out. * * * * * Wall street has planted itself on what it fondly believed to be its impregnable power to extort whatever it wanted. 'Only over our roads and on our terms shall you market your produce.'"

—*Chicago Tribune*, Dec., 1884.

IS THERE ANY REAL COMPETITION BETWEEN RAILROADS?

It might be well for those guileless innocents who think that railroads do really compete with one another, to reflect that the entire United States is accurately subdivided and assigned to several great *pools*, such as the "Eastern Pool," the "Western Trunk Line Association," the "Southwestern Pool," the "Southern Pool," the "Pacific Pool," which includes the Pacific Mail Steamship Company navigating the Pacific Ocean, which latter pond, supposed to belong to mankind in general, has lately been discovered to be the private property of Huntington, Stanford, Crocker & Co.

These pools are controlled by Albert Fink and his associate "high joints" of the commission. He is the great mogul who dictates to 55,000,000 of people just what they shall pay for every pound of freight fetched or carried.

Hon. Charles A. Sumner, of California, in a speech delivered in the House of Representatives, Jan. 7, 1885, tabulates the Pacific railroad properties as follows:

Companies controlled by the Union Pacific	56
" " " " Central "	33
" " " " U. P. & C. P. jointly	4
" " " " C. P. Huntington	12
Total	105

Does this look like competition?

Dillaye, five years ago, estimated that Gould, Vanderbilt, Garrett, the Pennsylvania railroad, and one or two other interests controlled *six hundred millions* of the railway capital of the country. In a few years, doubtless, the total will be a thousand millions absolutely in the hands of four or five men. Furthermore, they can, by traffic arrangements, control, almost completely, perhaps twice as much more. Are they not truly uncrowned kings? It may be urged that these great interests are *competitive*. At times they are; but that they can combine in a manner dangerous to the liberties of the people is only too well evidenced in the building up of the monstrous Standard Oil Company monopoly.

Every reader interested in this subject, should read the debates on the Reagan "Inter-State Commerce Bill." See Cong. Rec., session of 84–85.

NOTE XII.

THE MINING INDUSTRY.

One of the principal mining men of Utah recently declared that: "'With the present low rates for lead, and high rates of transportation we might as well turn our ores right over to the railroad companies.' This was by no means an exaggerated statement of the condition of affairs in Utah, and matters have long been worse in Nevada. Hundreds of good mines adjacent to the line of the Central Pacific Railroad are idle to-day as they have been for years, because the rates for transporting ores to San Francisco, Salt Lake, or other points where facilities for reduction could be obtained, were too high to leave the mine owner any adequate compensation for his toil and risk in prospecting for ore, extracting it from the mine, and hauling it to the railroad. The railroad will not fix a price per ton for hauling ores; it must have a percentage—'all the goods will bear.'" —*Virginia (Nev.), Chronicle*, Dec., 1884.

NOTE XIII.

STAND AND DELIVER.

These statements are no hyberbole, but disagreeable facts. The maxim "Charge all the traffic will bear," is one that railroad men are disposed to adopt whenever they dare. Instance the *seventy five per cent.* discrimination against dressed meats, in favor of live stock. It is a flagrant attempt to crush a new industry, because the railroads are interested in stock-yards, and other appurtenances of the old. The Central Pacific Railroad charges $300 per car from Omaha to San Francisco, and $800 per car to Reno, Nev., which is a less distance by several hundred miles.

They charge through rates from Omaha to San Francisco, and then add local rates back again to Reno, although the goods stop at Reno and never reach San Francisco. Furthermore, they compel merchants of San Francisco to subject their private business to inspection, and submit to examination of their books. This could not be done by any other power in the world, except, perhaps, the Czar of Russia. Where is the spirit of '76?

Also see speech of Congressman Daggett of Nevada, Feb. 25, 1881, introducing resolutions of the Legislature of Nevada.

UNJUST DISCRIMINATIONS.

An excellent illustration of the absurdity of the claims of railroad men that discriminations in freight rates are often necessary, is seen in the fact that the rates on sugar were one cent per pound from San Francisco to New York, and two cents from New York to San Francisco. Does it cost any more to run a train west than east? The answer is, that this discrimination is intended to build up the notorious Spreckels sugar monopoly, and make another money baron.

NOTE XIV.

PROFITS OF RAILROADS AND OTHER CORPORATIONS.

Poor's Manual, and other trustworthy authorities, estimate that the railroads of the United States should not cost over $25,000 per mile, including rolling stock and all equipments. (See note 18, Mexican National). The debates on the Reagan bill last winter ('84–'85) developed many additional facts bearing on this subject. The entire railroad capital of the United States including bonds, stocks, floating debts, etc., is in round numbers about *seven thousand millions*. The number of miles of road is a fraction over 121,000. At $25,000 per mile, this would give the *real* value of the whole about three thousand millions. Hence the other four thousand millions is *water* which the people of the United States are obliged to consider as real capital, and pay interest on accordingly. The defenders of railroad abuses admit that this seven thousand millions pays an average interest of three per cent. per annum. Hence on this basis the people pay three per cent. on four thousand millions of fictitious capital which never had any existence, or a total of *one hundred and twenty millions per year*, or about $2.20 for each man, woman, and child in the country. Part of this is a gratuitous contribution to Mr. Vanderbilt, whose income is estimated at from *ten to fifteen dollars per minute*.

The railroads carried in 1883 in round numbers four hundred million tons of freight, and received for transporting, both freight and passengers, something over eight hundred million dollars. Their profits were, in round numbers, three hundred and thirty-three millions. Now taking the actual investment at three thousand millions, as above, these figures show a net profit of over *ten per cent.* instead of the three per cent. claimed by these railroad advocates who are defending usurpation.

Furthermore, this state of things, instead of improving, is growing worse. Congressman George, of Oregon (Cong. Record of Dec. 20, 1884), estimates that, of the *new* roads, those built in 1879 are capitalized at $57,730 per mile, while those built in 1883 have crept up to $62,174 per mile. These latter were built when the cost of labor and materials was much less than in 1879. This upsets the plea of railroad men that most of

the roads now in use were built when prices were greatly inflated, and, consequently, cost more than they would now. Admitting that they did cost more; must the public make good the shrinkage on property caused by the natural laws of trade? Who indemnifies the owner of a house which was built when prices were inflated, at a cost of $10,000 and which is now worth only $5,000? *A thing is worth only what it can be duplicated for.* The truth is that railroad affairs in this country are honeycombed and saturated through and through with rascality.

T. B. THURBER'S TESTIMONY.

"How great this tax is may be inferred from the fact that the receipts of the railroads of this State (New York) as given in the report of the State Engineer and Surveyor, exceed $90,000,000, and I have seen it stated, and I believe it to be true, that probably one-half of this sum would pay ten per cent. interest on the capital actually paid by stock and bond holders in providing these facilities. The entire revenues of the State of New York derived from taxation are in the neighborhood of $8,000,000 and a great hue and cry is raised whenever it is proposed to increase this sum, even for the most necessary purposes, while all the time the public are sustaining a taxation in the shape of excessive charges for transportation many times greater than the entire amount required for the expense of the government."

T. B. THURBER, *Wholesale Grocer.*
Before Cong. Com. of Labor, Aug. 24, 1878.

TELEPHONE AND GAS PROFITS.

"In the city of Philadelphia the Bell Telephone Company paid last year $229,600 dividends on a capital of $560,000, or a profit of forty-one per cent."

How many farmers net six per cent. on their investments one year with another?

"An investigation by the New York Senate into the cost of gas, and prices charged consumers, developed the following facts in the testimony of President Kennedy of the Mutual Gas Company. In 1874 the Company charged consumers $2.75 per thousand feet, the gas costing $1.03. In 1884 the price charged was $2.16, while the cost was only forty-six cents per thousand feet. President Kennedy was reluctant to tell what had been the cost of the Company's plant."

—*Dispatch to Chicago Tribune* Feb. 27, 1885.

PACIFIC MAIL.

"The Pacific Mail Steamship Company in 1873 did not absolutely own one iron steamer. Out of their earnings in the past ten years they have paid for nineteen iron steamships, have a million dollars in their treasury, and are now (1884) paying a quarterly dividend at the rate of five per cent. per annum."

—RUFUS HATCH *in N. Y. Times.*

This Company has the modesty to ask a government subsidy, and receives a large bonus from the Pacific Railroad to kill competition.

NOTE XV.

INTIMIDATION OF COURTS.

"I have heard the counsel of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, standing in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, threaten that Court with the displeasure of his clients if it decided against them, and all the blood in my body tingled with shame at the humiliating spectacle."

—PREST. GOWAN, *of the Phila. and Reading R. R., before a Committee of the House of Representatives.*

NOTE XVI.

UNTAXABLE PROPERTY.

In Jersey City there are many millions of valuable railroad property and franchises *forever exempt from taxation* because of favorable legislation by corrupt or short-sighted boards of aldermen. But that, perhaps, makes little difference so long as corporations and wealthy men can evade taxation by bribing assessors. It is only the poor, and those of moderate means who must pay their taxes in full.

An investigating committee of the Illinois State Senate (1885) found its inquiries continually thwarted, and its deliberations hampered by the refusal of the representatives of corporations to answer questions concerning their capital and profits. Judging by their answers the inference is legitimate that nearly all corporations are managed by ignoramuses, and on the point of bankruptcy. *One* important fact was elicited—namely, that two or three corporations *absolutely ignored the assessor, and declined to give any information concerning their taxable property.*

NOTE XVII.

THE HOCKING VALLEY STRIKE.

The gates of the coal banks are closed, the chief stores have their shutters constantly down, the iron furnaces stand cold and grim by the roadside; brick yards, lumber mills and machine houses are abandoned. The workmen are idle and destitute, and the hand of charity feeds them and their families. The miners sit sullenly about the day long without money in their pockets, food in their houses, or hope in their hearts. Almost without exception the men are workless, their families ill fed, poorly clad, and miserably housed. Their faces are stolid, and the expression of their features that of despair. Eighteen months ago the men were paid seventy cents per ton in summer and eighty cents in winter. Since the "Syndicate" took control the men have been given work not more than one-third of the time. During the four months preceding last June their earnings averaged about $30 per month per man. At fifty cents per ton [the new rate] life could barely be supported as an animal is kept—something to eat, a place to sleep, a place to work. The company evidently regards the men as no better than animals. The mine, the coal hopper, the stables, the houses are the company's property. The men and the mules are their servants. When the company thinks best it closes the mine, locks the hopper, turns the mules out to pasture, and if the miner fails in his rent turns him out into the woods.

Miserable houses on worthless bits of ground, the whole premises worth not more than $200, brought from $60 to $90 per year in rents. Goods at the company's store sold from five to twenty-five per cent. higher than at the stores of individuals.

The plea that labor has been overpaid does not excuse the reduction. The Hocking Company's competitors pay seventy cents. This is the price in the valley of the Tuscarawas at Mahoning and Coshocton. Moreover, mines in the Hocking Valley owned by W. P. Rend & Co., of Chicago, pay seventy cents. Notwithstanding the reduction in wages, the "Syndicate" now charges one-quarter of a cent per bushel more for coal in Columbus than it did before.

—*Condensed from the Chicago Herald of Oct. 12, 1884.*

REND & CO.'S FIGHT IN THE HOCKING VALLEY.

To show that monopolists work together in defiance of right and law, the experiences of W. P. Rend & Co. are of great interest. The Hocking Valley R. R. Co., in aid of the Mining Co. in its contest with the strikers, refused to furnish Rend & Co. cars to transport their coal. An injunction, issued from the proper court, ordering them to furnish the cars. Then the Railroad Co. demanded *full local rates prepaid*, which amounted to a defiance of the court. It was only after a summons to show cause why they should not be punished for contempt, that the company reluctantly succumbed to the powers that be.

THE PENNSYLVANIA MINES.

In Pennsylvania affairs were in some instances as bad as in Ohio. To the farmer who works for fifteen dollars per month, board and lodging found, thirty dollars per month may seem large wages. But he must remember that miners often cannot work more than one-third of the year. Then their employment is very hazardous. In England mining was formerly (according to Adam Smith) considered worth three times the price of ordinary labor on account of the risk.

In Pennsylvania the coal lands are owned by the railroad companies. One of these great companies agreed to pay its men on a sliding scale, according to the price of coal at the mines. It then kept the price the same, but *doubled its rates of transportation*, thus doubling its profit. The companies also demanded that the men *sign an agreement waiving all their rights under the statutes* framed for the protection of miners. Also asked the abolition of the checkweighman, whose business it is to see fair weight and proper credits. Can freemen sign so degrading an agreement? Who will say that strikes are wholly unjustifiable in such cases?

NOTE XVIII.

ACTUAL COST OF RAILROAD BUILDING.

Railroad men in this country claim that the actual cost of building a mile of road is from $25,000 to $30,000. The rolling stock, equipments, depots and terminal facilities it is claimed about double these figures. The total capitalization of the railroads of the United States runs from fifty thousand to seventy thousand dollars per mile. In the face of these figures the actual cost of the Mexican National (an expensive road) as given below, is very interesting reading to the public.

"The building being done in a foreign country has involved exceptional elements of cost, and much of it has been through a mountainous region, and in ascending the plateau from the level of the sea. Notwithstanding, it is being built and *equipped* at a cost not exceeding $20,000 per mile, the original estimate. This includes organizing the whole system, and the building of the most expensive sections of the northern and southern ends, including one division from the City of Mexico to Toluca, forty six miles, crossing a mountain range at 10,000 feet above the level of the ocean, which cost about seventy-five thousand dollars per mile."

WM. J. PALMER, Pres't Mex. Nat. Railway.
—*in N. Y. Times*, Dec. 30, 1884.

NOTE XIX.

WHO MEETS THEIR LOSSES?

"One little item of news that has not had the attention it deserved is that the much-watered New York Central Road had to sell bonds during the last fiscal year to get money to pay its dividends with. Its earnings were $1,400,000 less than its expenses, and the deficit was made up by the sale of bonds, of which $5,000,000 were added to its indebtedness. Its capital is $89,000,000, more than half of it water. In 1868 there was a scrip dividend of 80 per cent., and in 1869, upon the consolidation of the Central with the Hudson River Road, a scrip dividend of 27 per cent. more was made on Central and one of 85 per cent. on the Hudson River stock. Here we have a perfect illustration of the attitude of these Wall street railroad men to the rest of the country. They create paper obligations far in excess of the value of their properties, and then insist that, no matter whether crops are short or whether their own management has been imbecile or corrupt, the country must be milked to pay dividends on their 'tissue ballots.' The New York Central was plunged last year into a railroad war, of which there has never been but one intelligible explanation. That is, that it was conceived and executed for the purely speculative purposes of its Vanderbilt managers. Millions were lost which the public must pay. Railroad debt is really public debt. The people pay it—principal and interest. To have it created by methods like those of the New York Central is a form of public robbery which must be stopped—'peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must.'"

—*Chicago Tribune*, 1885.

NOTE XX.

HOW DO THEY GET IT?

"A remarkable fact attending all the great railroads of the United States is the immense wealth of their leading officials. It is confined to no state, and is exceptional to all other employments. The grandest talent and greatest learning, in law, physic, and other learned avocations, accumulate a few thousands in a lifetime; but railroad officials, after rising from mere clerkships, roundsmen, ticket and other agents, with salaries running from hundreds to a few thousands, eventuate as possessors of many millions. It is no uncommon thing to see a railroad president, rising from the humblest station, in the course of fifteen or

twenty years become the owner of five, ten or twenty millions, at a salary which would not average for the whole time over ten or twelve thousand dollars. These are mysteries that the common people cannot understand."

HON. DAVID AGNEW,
Ex-Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

NOTE XXI.

THE REBATE SWINDLE.

The following table is from "Monopolies; Their Origin, Growth and Development," by Stephen B. Dillaye.

The Standard Oil Company received in rebates (of $1.00 per barrel) from Oct. 17, 1877, to March 31, 1879, about eighteen months, as follows:

From the Baltimore & Ohio, as per contract of Oct. 17, 1877	$ 1,116,633 98
From the New York Central, as per contract of same date	2,131,755 78
From the Erie, as per contract of same date	2,181,755 78
From the Pennsylvania R. R., as per contract of same date	4,711,072 46
	$10,141,218 00

These rebates enabled the Standard Oil Co. to undersell, drive out of business and ruin all their competitors. On the theory that the officers of railroad companies divide this swag with the recipient, is it not easy to explain why railroad officials get rich, in answer to Judge Agnew's question in Note 20?

net. It is not necessary for the 'Examiner' to relate the history of these contests. They are familiar to the people of the State. Such robberies have been so common as to have lost even the semblance of novelty. * * *

"Two men, McAuliffe and Riley, were the other day put in possession, as railroad tenants, of settler Cockrell's property. Yesterday McAuliffe was found dead, shot through the heart."

—*San Francisco Examiner*, Nov. 13, 1883.

See also the powerful story by C. C. Post, "Driven from Sea to Sea," page 10, on Iowa case. Also page 322, *et seq.* on Southern Pacific case alluded to above.

NOTE II.

COST OF THE PACIFIC RAILROADS AND THEIR SUBSIDIES.

The Report of the House Judiciary Committee, which investigated this subject in connection with the Credit Mobilier, showed these facts in connection with the three sub-contracts for building the Union Pacific.

Actual cost to Credit Mobilier:	
Hoxie Contract	$ 7,806,183.33
Ames "	27,285,141.99
Davis "	15,629,633.62
	$50,720,958.94
Charged to Union Pacific Railroad Company by Credit Mobilier:	
Hoxie Contract	$12,974,416.24
Ames "	57,140,102.94
Davis "	23,431,768.10
	$93,546,287.28
Difference (profits)	42,825,328.34
To which add $1,104,000 for 58 miles already paid for	1,104,000.00
Total steal	$43,929,328.34

The Contract and Finance Company, composed of C. P. Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, E. B. Crocker, and Mark Hopkins, built the Central Pacific from Sacramento east. Although they escaped Congressional investigation, there is no doubt that they employed like methods with similar profitable results. Their profits have been estimated in the following manner. The actual cost of the Union Pacific was $50,000,000, length, 1,008 miles (allowing the Company's own excessive figures, which are about double what they should be.) The Central Pacific, which is 150 miles shorter, could not have cost more. Therefore, credit the Central Pacific with that amount. Charge the Credit and Finance Company with the following:

U. S. Subsidy bonds Central Pacific	$25,885,120
" " " Western " absorbed by Central Pacific	1,970,560
First mortgage bonds, Act of '64	28,000,000
Stock Central Pacific	54,000,000
Land Bonds	10,000,000
	$119,855,680

Here is a clear profit on construction alone of over $69,000,000. The profits of this road are ordinarily about $10,000,000 per year. The combined wealth of all these men before they began the building of the Central Pacific Road was less than $100,000. Was there ever a greater gift to any body of men or to any corporation, since the dawn of history?

SUMMARY.

The Pacific Railroad construction transactions may be summarized as follows: 2,000 miles of roads, at the company's excessive figures of $50,000 per mile cost $100,000,000, but in reality not over $55,000,000. The company received to pay for this:

U. S. bonds	$55,000,000
Their own first mortgage bonds	50,000,000
Stock which the law required to be sold at par, but for which they did not pay over 30 cents on the dollar (in fraudulent contracts)	90,000,000
Land bonds, 21,000,000 acres	20,000,000
	$215,000,000
Profit (steal)	$160,000,000

The above estimate gives land bonds at $20,000,000, while, in fact, the lands were worth from $1 to $6 per acre, or a total of, say, $70,000,000 at $3.50 per acre. It is reasonable, therefore, to estimate the entire Pacific Railroad steal, in all its crooked phases, at *two hundred and ten million dollars.*

THE PACIFIC LAND GRANTS.

"Independent of the postponement of our vast debt to a private debt, we gave them, as the judiciary committee show in their report, coal lands alone, as their directors say, larger than all the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania. We gave them 21,000,000 acres of land, or over 33,000 square miles, more territory than is contained in the six States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey and Delaware, all of this vast domain being within twelve miles of a trans-continental railroad." —*Speech of* SENATOR BECK.

WHAT THE PACIFIC RAILROAD STOCK IS.

"This ninety millions of stock, claiming dividends, standing between the companies and their obligations to the government, does not represent one dollar nor the phantom of a dollar. If it represents anything, it is simply *an arbitrary profit upon fraudulent contracts.* The assumption that it is actual capital is a bare, naked assumption, without a fig-leaf covering of fact." —*Speech of* SENATOR BOOTH.

And yet it has paid as high as *fifteen per cent. annual dividends.*

THE CREDIT MOBILIER BY ONE WHO KNOWS.

Question. Then what purpose had you to propose to build a road

that had already been built by the company at a cost to them of less than the amount mentioned in your proposition?*

Answer. We were identical in interest. The Credit Mobilier and the Union Pacific Railroad were the same identical parties; we were building it for ourselves, by ourselves, and among ourselves; there was not $20,000 outside in it.

I. M. S. WILLIAMS.†

NOTE III.

CORRUPTION MONEY.

Jay Gould's testimony before a New York legislative investigating committee, 1873:

"I do not know how much I paid toward helping friendly men. We had four States to look after, and we had to suit our politics to circumstances. In a Democratic district I was a Democrat; in a Republican district I was a Republican; and in a doubtful district I was doubtful; but in every district and at all times, I have always been an Erie man."

Further investigation in the same direction developed the fact that the Erie Railroad Company paid out in one year *one million dollars* for corrupt purposes.

Testimony before a committee of the New York Constitutional Convention.

Edwin D. Worcester, sworn: I am treasurer of the New York Central Railroad Company, and have been for two years; was assistant treasurer for two years previous.

Question. Do you know of the New York Central Railroad Company paying out considerable amounts of money during the sessions of legislation?

Answer. Yes, considerable amounts of money.

Ques. I think you have succeeded in procuring legislation for two or three years past.

Ans. Yes, we succeeded in getting the legislation.

Ques. Were the expenses attending the application paid by the president of the road?

Ans. I can state the amount of money he had; the whole amount was $205,000.

Ques. How are the items or entries made in your books with reference to the expenditure of this $205,000?

Ans. There were no entries made with regard to these disbursements.

The Supreme Court record at Washington shows (I am told) in Vol. II., Transcript Rec. 1877, that one Joseph B. Stewart, a lobbyist, states with reference to the Pacific Railroad legislation of 1864, that he received two hundred and fifty $1,000 railroad construction bonds, to be used to "further the purposes which the railroad company desired to forward in Washington."

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*The allusion, "road already built" refers to a large portion already built which was counted in a new contract, *and paid for a second time.*

†One of the contractors before a Committee of the House of Representatives.

NOTE IV.

THE POOR OF NEW YORK.

In one front and rear building covering a lot 25 by 95 feet, were found 258 persons. In three rooms, two of which were mere closets, without windows or openings into the halls, twenty-five persons were living. In another case, a family consisting of father, mother and four children, took in fourteen boarders, though occupying but three rooms. A family of five were discovered in a filthy cellar, which they shared with fifteen geese.
—*Report of Sanitary Aid Society of Tenth Ward, New York*, April, 1885.

NOTE V.

BUSINESS OR GAMBLING?

"Let any one visit the exchanges and look on for a few minutes for himself; no *gambling hell* in any part of the world will show a madder throng, or more passionate playing. This was formerly true only of the stock exchange, but it is becoming more and more the leading feature of the several trade exchanges, and shows the character of the *business* therein transacted."

—*N. Y. Journal of Commerce.*

FICTITIOUS SALES OF PETROLEUM.

"Less than 25,000,000 barrels of petroleum were produced last year; yet there were *seven billion, one hundred and eighty-one million* barrels sold upon the two petroleum exchanges of this city, and the oneat Pittsburgh. The transactions were two hundred and eighty-seven times greater than the year's yield, or, in other words, for every barrel of crude oil produced, 287 barrels were sold."

—JUSTICE.—*N. Y. Jan.* 24, 1885.

NOTE VI.

BREACH OF FRIENDSHIP.

Lest the betrayal of Mr. Norwell by Ophir may seem extravagantly unnatural, the reader is referred to several similar conspicuous cases, which have actually occurred, and which have been carried to the courts for adjustment. For obvious reasons the names of the litigants are not mentioned here, but the reader who is conversant with such matters will at once recall them.

NOTE VII.

ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH.

It has been estimated by a newspaper writer that the combined wealth of all the men worth a million dollars or over givesan equivalent of twenty thousand millionaires in the United States, and that, as the average wealth of all citizens is only $1,000, for each millionaire, there must be 1,000 people who have nothing, and for twenty thousand million-